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A brave new budget?

Hagel's proposal to reshape forces meets with strong opposition

By PATRICK DICKSON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel fired the first shot Monday. The return fire has been intense.

In a preview of the Obama administration's 2015 defense budget request, Hagel proposed shrinking the Army to its smallest size in three-quarters of a century, curbing the growth on military pay and benefits and focusing spending on force-multiplying technologies.

Using the first full budget



INSIDE: Potential LCS cuts leave gap in Navy's future fleet | Page 4

with his imprint as secretary, Hagel is hoping to reshape the military after more than a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan at a time when the

Pentagon is roped in by fiscal constraints set by Congress.

"We are repositioning to focus on the strategic challenges and opportunities that

will define our future: new technologies, new centers of power and a world that is growing more volatile, more unpredictable and in some instances more threatening to the United States," Hagel said Monday at the Pentagon.

President Barack Obama will submit his budget to Congress next week.

Cutting forces and slowing the growth on pay and benefits for the troops immediately raised red flags among leading Republicans and Democrats.

SEE BUDGET ON PAGE 3

'SERIOUS SHORTCOMINGS'

Doctors Without Borders report paints grim picture of Afghan health system
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CASSANDRA VINOGRAD/AP

An Afghan mother shows off her 3-hour-old baby in the maternity ward of Ahmad Shah Baba Hospital in Kabul on Monday.

Army survey reveals few women want combat jobs

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
The Associated Press

FORT EUSTIS, Va. — Only a small fraction of Army women say they'd like to move into one of the newly opening combat jobs, but those few who do say

they want a job that takes them right into the heart of battle, according to preliminary results from a survey of the service's nearly 170,000 women.

That survey and others across the Army, publicly disclosed for the first time to

The Associated Press, also revealed that soldiers of both genders are nervous about women entering combat jobs but say they are determined to do it fairly. Men are worried about losing their jobs to women; women are worried

they will be seen as getting jobs because of their gender and not their qualifications.

Both are emphatic that the Army must not lower standards to accommodate women.

SEE WOMEN ON PAGE 2

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I think I have as good a knowledge of veterans issues as Sen. [Bernie] Sanders does, so therefore, I think I should be able to debate and amend as I choose to do so."

— Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., addressing Senate procedure for debating a bill diverting money to veterans health care and benefits

See story on Page 8

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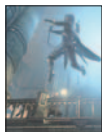
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MILITARY

Women: Maintaining physical standards is a common goal

FROM FRONT PAGE

Less than 8 percent of Army women who responded to the survey said they wanted a combat job. Of those, an overwhelming number said they'd like to be a Night Stalker — a member of the elite special operations helicopter crews who perhaps are best known for flying the Navy SEALs into Osama bin Laden's compound in 2011.

Last year top Pentagon officials signed an order saying women must have the same opportunities as men in combat jobs and the services have been devising updated physical standards, training, education and other programs for thousands of jobs they must open Jan. 1, 2016. The services must open as many jobs to women as possible; if they decide to keep some closed, they must explain why.

Throughout last year, the Army emailed questionnaires to active duty, reserves and Army National Guard members to gauge soldiers' views on the move to bring women into combat jobs. The results from the survey sent to women showed that just 2,238 — or 7.5 percent — of the 30,000 who responded said they would want one of the infantry, armor, artillery and combat engineer jobs.

Army officials also polled men and women on their concerns about the integration. And they asked senior female leaders to say whether they would have chosen combat jobs if they'd been given that chance 10 or 20 years ago.

Maintaining standards

All agreed the physical standards for the jobs should remain the same.

"The men don't want to lower the standards because they see that as a perceived risk to their team," David Brinkley, deputy chief of staff for operations at the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, told the AP. "The women don't want to lower the standards because they want the men to know they're just as able as they are to do the same task."

Brinkley's office at Fort Belvoir is filled with charts, graphs and data the Army is using to methodically bring women into jobs that have been previously open only to men. The surveys are helping to shape the education and preparation that women, men and top leaders need



Female soldiers train on a firing range in Fort Campbell, Ky., in September 2012. Only a small fraction of Army women surveyed say they'd like to move into one of the newly opening combat jobs.

to put in place to ensure the integration goes smoothly.

The questionnaires, and the focus groups that followed them, showed that younger men and those who have served with women in the last two years are more open to the integration, while mid-level soldiers — particularly those in units such as infantry and armor that have not yet included women — were more hesitant.

There were nagging stereotypes. Male soldiers fretted that their unit's readiness will be degraded because of what they term "women issues," such as pregnancy and menstrual cycles. Or they worried that women incapable of the physical demands would be brought in anyway.

Officers were concerned about sexual harassment and improper relationships. The idea of integrated units bothered both military wives and husbands.

Plagued by an increase in reported sexual assaults, the military is putting a much greater emphasis on training, reporting and treatment. That increased focus has prompted some troops to say they are worried to be in the same room together, Brinkley said.

The men worry that anything they say could ruin their careers, Brinkley said.

"Did we have a problem? Yes," Brinkley said. "Are we aggressively solving it? Yes."

He added, "We've kind of created a little environment of fear, which we fear might frankly hinder integration."

The solution, Brinkley and other Army leaders said, involves

education, training and good leadership.

Women across the Army have been getting pregnant for years and those units have dealt with it. And, while inappropriate relationships do happen, they are a violation of regulations. So it is up to unit leaders to enforce the Uniform Code of Military Justice in the combat arms units, just as they do in others.

Leaders not surprised

Army leaders were not surprised by the small number of women interested in combat jobs.

"The issue is going to be the propensity of women who want to do some of these things," Gen. Ray Odierno, chief of staff of the Army, said in an interview with the AP. "I don't think it's going to be as great as people think."

According to the survey, the vast majority of the women who expressed interest in combat jobs were in the lower ranks, age 27 or younger.

Some of the more experienced soldiers said that if they had it to do all over again, they might choose one of the combat arms jobs.

The limited interest also is in line with what other countries, such as Norway, have seen as they integrated women into combat roles, Brinkley said.

What surprised even him was what the women named as their preferred combat career.

More than 30 percent of the survey respondents pointed to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

"I went back to the analysts and

I said, 'Is there a glitch in this?'" Brinkley said.

Adding women will help the unit fill some spots. The 160th commander has said he is struggling to get mechanics, for example, but even though there are many in the Army, he can't bring them on because they are women.

The 160th is a specialized unit used to fly forces fast, low and deep behind enemy lines under cover of darkness. Seventeen women already work in the unit in administrative, intelligence and logistics posts. There have long been women aviators and aircrew in the conventional Army, just not on the special operations teams.

Hundreds of pilot and crew positions in the 160th were formally opened to women last June. As of Monday, officials said a number of women had applied and a handful have gotten the initial favorable assessment that allows them to begin moving through the process that includes a rigorous training course.

The second-most popular choice was infantry, followed closely by combat engineers. Far fewer said they wanted to be in the field artillery, where unit members move and work with massive rocket and cannon systems.

The least popular branch of the Army they named was armor jobs that involve working in the hulking tanks and armored vehicles.

"We've got to utilize the talent that we have available," Odierno said. "We have some incredible female talent that we've been ignoring for a long time. We've got to get it in the right place."

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MILITARY

NATO still top world military power

By SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

Despite impending cuts in the armed forces of many of its member nations, NATO remains by far the largest military force in the world, outstripping any potential rivals in terms of numbers and defense expenditures, according to annual statistics released by the alliance.

The data also show that the United States still accounts for more than 70 percent of the total defense expenditures of NATO's 28 member countries.

The release of the latest NATO figures comes ahead of a meeting of defense ministers in Brussels and coincides with Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's proposal for continued cuts in U.S. military spending after 13 years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Hagel's plan would result in slashing the active-duty Army to between 440,000 and 450,000 troops, its smallest size since before World War II. Congress has already mandated nearly \$500 billion in defense spending cuts in coming years, triggering a major re-evaluation of U.S. mili-

tary needs.

Among NATO's European members, only Estonia, Greece and Britain spent more than the alliance's target sum of 2 percent of gross domestic product on their armed forces last year. The U.S. dedicated 4.1 percent of its GDP to defense, or \$735 billion, according to the NATO data.

The combined defense expenditures of all NATO nations in 2013 amounted to \$1.02 trillion. That figure includes research and development expenditures related to purchase of major equipment and pensions.

By comparison, the total of military budgets for all countries in the world was \$1.745 trillion in 2012, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in Sweden.

In 2012, China's expenditures amounted to \$166 billion and Russia's were \$90 billion. Iran trailed with just under \$7 billion, according to SIPRI.

By troop numbers, NATO also held a lopsided advantage over any other nation, with a total of 3,370,000 servicemembers in 2013, according to NATO's statistics. That contrasts with

Russia's 766,000 troops and China's estimated 2.3 million active-duty personnel, according to Sam Perlo-Freeman, director of SIPRI's program on military expenditures.

"NATO still accounts for a clear majority of world military spending, over 60 percent, and a substantial number of other top spenders are American allies like Saudi Arabia and Israel," Perlo-Freeman said. "In terms of military capabilities, the U.S. and NATO will remain absolutely unmatched for the foreseeable future."

Perlo-Freeman warned that although China's military capabilities "are far, far shorter" than America's, it doesn't mean that Washington can impose its will in China's "near-environment."

As for Russia, Perlo-Freeman said it could compare with the West only in its nuclear capabilities. "But its conventional forces have a lot of serious deficiencies in terms of command and control and mobility, (and) in terms of actually being able to fight modern warfare, they are far behind Western countries," he said.

Defense budgets in most European nations have come under increasing pressure since the start of the economic recession six years ago. Although military expenditures appear to have escaped major cuts during that period, analysts expect that, with the withdrawal of NATO combat troops from Afghanistan at the end of the year, they will fall to levels hard to imagine just a decade ago.

Since 2010, European nations have cut their military forces by a total of about 160,000 servicemembers.

Over the next several years, the trend is expected to continue on the assumption that the alliance will not be engaged in another large-scale, long-duration ground war anytime soon.

Britain has already announced it will cut 30,000 armed forces personnel, leaving just 147,000 servicemembers by 2020. Belgium intends to slash its defense budget by 20 percent, and several other countries are expected to follow suit.

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Say what?

A sample of reader comments from stripes.com



DOD looks to cut commissary savings

The Defense Department subsidy for commissaries would drop from \$1.4 billion annually to \$400 million under the defense budget proposal announced Monday. The cut would come by reducing the amount of savings over civilian markets that servicemembers enjoy.

Readers respond:

Sad, the assault on military benefits continues. — S A M

Let's give this a chance. The alternative means the workers lose their jobs. — parkersd61

If the prices of things in the commissary are going to be the same as at Walmart, Kroger, Safeway, etc., then why bother? Close them down. — Thecalmvoiceofreason

Hopefully this is yet another (badly needed) wake-up call to the rank-and-file enlisted who still believe that the folks in Washington actually care about them. — ND52

I support commissaries overseas and in remote locations, but I've long believed them a waste of taxpayer money in densely populated areas. ... You can usually do better elsewhere. — The Bad Toz Bully

Privatize it and let a grocery chain run it as a franchise. — GaryOwen6

So more active-duty personnel and veterans on food stamps... this is just not right... — Gangnam Style

The commissary may not be a big deal to some but to us it's a need for my family. ... I support my military programs and I will do the best I can to continue, until I can't afford to... — rimkus01134

Nothing is sacred anymore people...everything is on the chopping block now. — Joe Black

Join the fray at: stripes.com/go/commissary

Budget: Proposed cutbacks attacked from many directions

FROM FRONT PAGE

"The all-volunteer force is a finely tuned instrument," Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon, R-Calif., the House Armed Services Committee chairman, said in a statement. "That is why [last year's defense bill] instituted a commission to examine the compensation structure. I continue to believe it would be foolish to institute those significant, piecemeal changes before the commission reports — especially since these moves are the consequence of trying to resolve our fiscal problems on the backs of our troops."

"There's going to be a huge challenge," conceded Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman.

Having backtracked just this month on suggested cuts to cost-of-living increases of 1 percent to military retirements, lawmakers appear in little mood to weigh difficult, if necessary, defense reductions, especially as the nation gears up for mid-term elections in November. They backtracked in large part due to the pressure by veterans groups, who again went on the offensive.

The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America hammered the administration for proposing a budget that they say would increase the cost of living for servicemembers.

"Here we go again," IAVA founder and CEO Paul Rickhoff, said in a statement. "Washington is trying to balance the budget on the backs of those who have

sacrificed the most. We know the Defense Budget must make difficult budget decisions, but these cuts would hit servicemembers, making it harder for them and their families to make ends meet."

"Last week we learned that members of the military redeemed nearly \$104 million in food stamps at commissaries in the previous year," Rickhoff said. "Now the Defense Department wants to cut subsidies that servicemembers use to pay for diapers for their kids and to put bread on the table."

An Army of fewer

At its core, the plan sees the U.S. military as no longer sized to combat



Odierno

large, protracted ground wars. Instead, more emphasis will be on versatile, agile forces that can project power over great distances, including in Asia.

The active-duty Army would shrink from 522,000 soldiers to between 440,000 and 450,000. That would make it the smallest since just before the U.S. entered World War II.

According to documents obtained by USA Today, Gen. Raymond Odierno, the Army's chief of staff, is unhappy about the reductions.

Odierno has warned Pentagon leaders that the 450,000-soldier level would be "too small," and at "high risk to meet one major war," according to the documents.

The documents also showed that Army leaders said the service could not adequately protect the country and fight abroad at the 420,000-soldier level — a lower level that is possible if sequestration it re-imposed in 2016.

The last time the active-duty Army was below 500,000 was in 2005, when it stood at 492,000. Its post-World War II low was 480,000 in 2001, according to historical tables provided by the Army. In 1940, the Army had 267,000 active-duty members, and it surged to 1.46 million the following year as the U.S. approached entry into World War II.

Guard reductions

In Washington for the annual National Governors Association meeting, several state leaders expressed dismay at possible cuts to the National Guard.

Gov. Terry Branstad, R-Iowa, said he and others were concerned about reductions in funding because the National Guard plays such a crucial role in responding to emergencies in states. Given that the Army has experienced a disproportionate increase in its budget in the past decade, Branstad said, "that's where we think the reductions should be made."

Other contentious elements include the elimination of the Air Force's A-10 "Warthog" tank-

killer aircraft and the Cold War-era U-2 spy plane, and domestic military base closings that Congress has roundly rejected since Obama became president.

Military compensation will also take a hit.

The tax-free housing allowance will be rolled back by 5 percent; a military pay raise would match last year's 1 percent increase — if Congress doesn't mandate more; commissary subsidies



Branstad

would be slashed by more than two-thirds, resulting in higher costs to the shopper; and health care fees would increase for active-duty families and retirees.

Retired Vice Adm. Norb Ryan, president of the Military Officers Association of America, said benefits and pay raises are key to maintaining a healthy all-volunteer force.

"Past experience capping military raises below private sector pay growth shows once pay raise caps begin, they continue until they undermine retention and readiness," Ryan said. "When extended pay raise caps hurt retention in the 1970s, Congress had to enact two double-digit raises to correct that."

The Associated Press, The Washington Post and USA Today contributed to this report. dickson.pat@stripes.com Twitter: StripesDChief

MILITARY

DOD 2015 budget scales back LCS program

By ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

The Navy will not contract for any more than 32 littoral combat ships, 20 less than the Navy planned for, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Wednesday in Washington.

The coastal ship has come under criticism in recent years for its lighter armament and lower survivability standard than some of the larger ships currently in the fleet. The planned 52-ship

order would have meant that the LCS would have made up about one-sixth of the Navy fleet.

Supporters of the program, including Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, say the LCS's top speed — upwards of 50 mph — and its low draft allow the Navy to easily go into areas it can't with its current fleet makeup.

But the Navy is "relying too heavily on the LCS to achieve its long term goals for ship numbers," Hagel said during a news conference.

Hagel's announcement came as he and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey outlined the Pentagon's proposals for the fiscal year 2015 defense budget. Congress still may have a say in the LCS' future, though powerful lawmakers such as Sen. John McCain have been critical of the program in the past.

In January, acting Deputy Defense Secretary Christine Fox, in an unreleased memo, directed the Navy to halt LCS production

after 32 ships and begin development of a "more capable surface combatant."

Despite resistance from top Navy officials, it appears that Fox and those in the Pentagon who share her point of view have won the argument.

Hagel also reiterated President Barack Obama's pledge to maintain the aircraft carrier fleet at 11 ships.

He conceded that funding would be a challenge.

"We would have no other choice

than to retire [the USS George Washington] should sequestration-level cuts be reimposed," Hagel said.

About half of the carrier fleet will reduce operations as a cost-saving measure.

The Navy's plans to continue buying two destroyers and fast-attack submarines per year remain on course, Hagel added.

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Cuts of Navy's fast ship would leave gap in fleet

By ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

The lighter, faster surface fleet of the future is now looking a little heavier than Navy leaders have planned as high-ranking skeptics at the Pentagon have apparently won the argument to curtail the service's reliance on a new coastal warfare ship.

At the beginning of the year, the Navy was headed toward three decades of more speed in coastal areas and less slug-it-out strength on the high seas. By 2026, about one in six active-duty vessels would be a littoral combat ship, a light hull that can move upward of 50 mph, but one that carries less armament and protection in comparison with some of the ships it would replace.

But last month, the Navy's 52-ship LCS purchase plan began sinking. Deputy Defense Secretary Christine Fox, in an unreleased memo, directed the Navy to halt LCS production after 32 ships — 20 less than planned — and begin development of a "more capable surface combatant."

Navy officials stated throughout that they would continue to plan for a 52-ship buy, and media reports cited the service's top leaders continuing to lobby privately for the full order. They argued that the LCS gives the Navy a presence in water that its larger ships can't access.

On Monday, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel effectively announced that he had sided with the skeptics, ordering no new LCS contracts beyond 32 ships.

"We need to closely examine whether the LCS has the independent protection and firepower to operate and survive against a more advanced military adversary and emerging new technologies, especially in the Asia Pacific," Hagel said while outlining the Pentagon's 2015 budget request in Washington.

Congress could still overrule Hagel's plan by legislating a larger LCS buy. However, influential lawmakers, including Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., have been sharply critical of the LCS in previous sessions.

When the Navy first planned to build more than 50 LCSs in



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The littoral combat ship USS Independence demonstrates its maneuvering capabilities in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of San Diego in July. Some within the Pentagon are calling for the Navy's order of the ship to be dramatically reduced, raising questions about what the future surface fleet will look like.

"You really need presence in the world oceans and waterways. You need to be able to show the flag and have a viable warship if push comes to shove and a fight is there."

Eric Wertheim
editor, Combat Fleets of the World

the 2000s, the fleet had a long-term goal of maintaining 313 to 375 active ships a year. As the economy worsened and defense budgets stopped growing, that goal was reduced to 306 ships. The Congressional Research Service projected on Feb. 10 that the Navy was unlikely to meet even that goal for much of the next 30 years. Currently, the Navy has 283 ships, including submarines.

Despite the downward trend in overall ship numbers, the 52-ship LCS plan had changed little.

"I think the U.S. Navy is starting to say, 'Wait a second, we really face a war-fighting gap if the

shipbuilding plan continues as it is,'" said Eric Wertheim, defense consultant and editor of the U.S. Naval Institute reference guide *Combat Fleets of the World*. "If there aren't going to be enough ships in the future, perhaps its

best to make every ship count, to be able to fight in harm's way."

Three LCSs are active, with an additional one nearly so; 20 are under construction or on order.

During most of the next 30 years, under current projections,

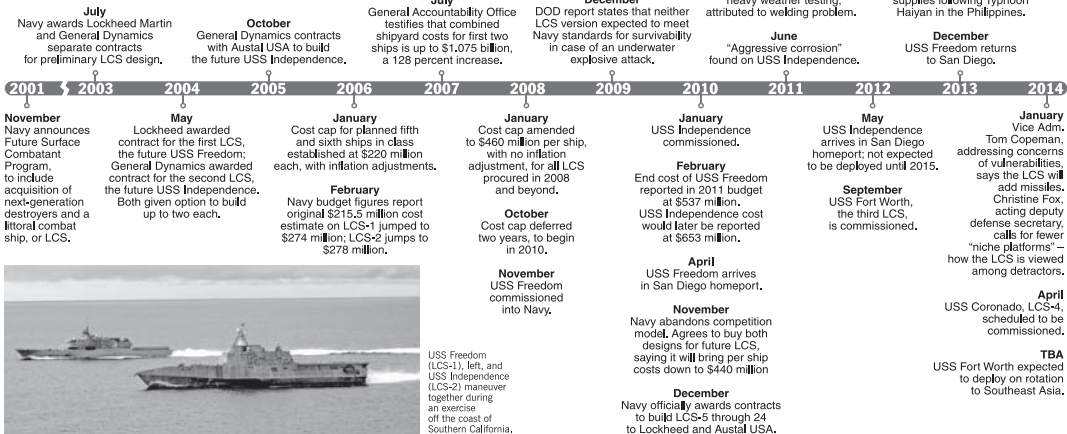
the Navy will "experience shortfalls at various points in cruisers-destroyers, attack submarines, and amphibious ships," according to a Congressional Research Service report in November.

SEE CUTS ON PAGE 5

MILITARY

LCS development follows tumultuous path

In its early days, the littoral combat ship program was plagued by massive cost increases and concerns about its survivability. Supporters of the fast, low-draft ship say future models will cost less and won't have the same maintenance issues. The Pentagon is pushing to cut at least 20 of the ships from the Navy's planned 52-ship buy. At least 16 ships have been built, are under construction or are in pre-production phases; eight more are under contract.



SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, Lockheed Martin, Austal USA, U.S. Naval Institute, U.S. Navy

Stars and Stripes

Cuts: Few designs exist for 'capable and lethal small surface combatant' ship

FROM PAGE 4

Meanwhile, Navy officials say their requests for ships from combat commanders and foreign allies aren't falling, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, where China's territorial claims have alarmed several of its smaller neighbors. Ship deployments that once ran six months are increasingly dragging out to eight or nine months.

The Navy faces three broad options: Modify one or both of the current LCS variants; design something completely new; or cut back on the number of global missions.

Hagel directed the Navy to submit alternative proposals for new designs, existing designs and modified LCSs in time to submit the fiscal year 2016 budget.

Modifying the LCS with systems more commonly associated with a frigate—lighter than a destroyer, but heavier than an LCS—would be least disruptive to the overall budget and shipbuilding budget, Wertheim said.

"You really need presence in the world oceans and waterways," he said. "You need to be able to show the flag and have a viable warship if push comes to shove and a fight is there. A surface combat frigate replacement is what European allies have done."

A beefed-up LCS with an Aegis combat system, resembling a frigate, was pitched to Saudi Arabia and Israel at one time, Wertheim noted.

The LCS has been sold by proponents as a replacement for the fleet's aging frigates, along with its mine-countermeasure vessels and coastal patrol ships.

It accomplishes those ships' tasks with modules built for various missions, including mine-hunting, anti-submarine, amphibious and surface warfare. However, it can't switch between these modules without going back to the dock for a refit, which is fine for a planned mission but may be impossible in a wartime situation.

LCS is built to a survivability standard higher than that of the coastal and mine-hunting ships but lower than that of frigates. That standard garnered attention in January 2013 when a Pentagon report stated that the ship could not continue its mission "after taking a significant hit in a hostile combat environment."

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert defended the survivability last year during a Pentagon briefing.

"We believe that they should be built to operate and, if damaged in combat, to survive and then to withdraw, if you will," Greenert said.

That standard of survivability provoked criticism from Pentagon officials and lawmakers like McCain, and from some of the sailors who could be called to fight on the ships.

Analysts agree that the ship could be modified with Aegis

To explore an interactive timeline of the LCS development go to stars.com/go/lcstimeline

systems, vertical launch missiles and other defenses.

Those modifications would also sacrifice speed and add weight. But LCS skeptics would prefer a ship with more muscle that can cruise at 35 mph over a lighter ship able to approach 50 mph.

The Navy could design something from scratch to replace the LCS.

It's unclear how soon that could happen, though service officials have said they are looking at developing an escort ship—a typical frigate mission—over the long term.

There are few existing ship designs that fit Hagel's directive for "a capable and lethal small surface combatant." One possibility could be a proposed frigate variant of the Coast Guard's on-order

National Security Cutter.

A new ship program beginning from the planning phase could take a decade or more to get the kinks worked out. New programs are also prone to going over budget, with no better example than the LCS itself. The first of its class cost \$537 million, well over twice as much as projected. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus labeled the early program "a mess" during congressional testimony last year.

Some analysts argue that the Navy would do just as good a job protecting national security with fewer ships.

Navy leaders like having more ships, but they are wary of having more than they can properly man and maintain, said Benjamin Friedman, a defense analyst at Cato Institute, a nonpartisan, libertarian think tank.

"Congress is more eager to drive up ship numbers for reasons of parochialism and local

economies," Friedman said.

The LCS cut might be related to budgeting concerns on the Navy's next-generation nuclear ballistic missile submarine, Friedman said. The Navy hasn't budgeted for a replacement of the aging leg of the nuclear triad, and a supplemental budget request may not be approved, he said.

The number of ships isn't as important as what the ships can do, and who the enemy is, Friedman said.

Fewer ships might even benefit the Navy if it forces the service to examine spending money on missions that aren't urgent national security priorities, he said.

"They do a lot of patrolling the globe and doing mil-to-mil relationship building with other navies," Friedman said. "That's not completely useless, but it's hardly a great use of taxpayer resources."

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MIDEAST

Poll finds Afghan voters are ready for unity

By FATIMAH WASEEM

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — With Afghanistan's presidential election less than two months away, a public opinion survey has found signs that voters are ready to build a unified nation after three decades of war.

The survey found that respondents overwhelmingly trust the country's national government, its army and its police, and oppose Taliban rule. Nearly 80 percent of respondents said they believe the Afghan government effectively controls the country. About 72 percent said they trust the national army and 64 percent said they trust the national police.

How Afghans want to pursue peace is unclear. Although most Afghans desire a peace agreement with the Taliban, they have little confidence that it would be honored. Most reject Western involvement in Afghan politics but nearly 80 percent say the international community should help rebuild the country by providing development aid, supporting elections and mediating negotiations with the Taliban, the survey says.

The survey was conducted in September and October by Assess, Transform and Reach, a Kabul-based consulting firm, which surveyed more than 4,200 respondents from 11 provinces. Lola Cecchini, head of research

at ATR, said there was no way to know if the sample, despite its size, was representative of the total Afghan population, since no census has been conducted in Afghanistan since 1979. Afghanistan includes at least 14 distinct ethnic groups whose representation in the population is subject to debate, as is the size of the population.

Despite the seemingly overwhelming support for the Afghan government, "there are still very complex differences between groups," Cecchini said of the survey's results.

The survey revealed a sharp division between the country's north, where Tajiks are the dominant ethnic group, and the south,

where Pashtuns dominate. The Taliban are largely Pashtun, while Tajiks were the primary members of the Northern Alliance, which fought Taliban rule before U.S. intervention after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Only 2 percent of respondents in the north favored Taliban rule, compared with more than 26 percent in the south, the survey found.

Perceptions of living conditions also were divided between north and south. Most Afghans in the south said their living conditions had deteriorated, while 73 percent of people in the north said their living conditions had improved over the last decade.

A recent Gallup poll showed

nearly 55 percent of Afghans live in poor conditions, the highest percentage among all countries polled by the organization in 2013 and the highest percentage in Afghanistan since Gallup began surveying the country in 2008.

Opinion surveys have been controversial in Afghanistan, where some politicians have claimed the U.S. government has conducted surveys designed to produce results favorable to U.S. policies in the country. While U.S. officials deny that charge, the Obama administration has decided not to fund any public opinion surveys before the presidential election, which is scheduled for April.

ATR's survey was not commissioned by the United States.

Aid group: Afghan health care system remains troubling

By CASSANDRA VINOGRAD

The Associated Press

KABUL — Gaping holes in Afghanistan's health care system are being obscured by misleading narratives of success ahead of the international troop withdrawal in 2014, aid organization Medecins Sans Frontieres warns in a new report published Tuesday.

MSF — or Doctors Without Borders — said that while some progress has been made from the last decade of international investment, access to medical care in Afghanistan remains severely limited and poorly adapted to meet the needs of an ongoing conflict — partly because decisions about humanitarian aid have been influenced by political and military objectives instead of Afghans' pressing needs.

"As troops pack their bags, MSF fears a war that still rages in many parts of the country and a failure to meet people's increasing medical and humanitarian needs," the group said. "International donors, aid providers and Afghan authorities must urgently address serious shortcomings in health care provision."

Efforts to shape and define a legacy of international intervention in Afghanistan have contributed to overly rosy assessments of progress, emphasizing achievements while neglecting unmet humanitarian needs, according to the aid organization's report, which was provided to The Associated Press ahead of its public release.

"It is striking how far the accounts of ordinary Afghans differ from prevailing narratives of progress," the report said. "Any desire to package Afghanistan into a simplified political or military success story risks masking the reality of the ongoing conflict

and the suffering of hundreds of thousands of people who do not have access to adequate medical assistance."

MSF was careful to note that more than 10 years of investment in Afghanistan have produced some signs of progress. But international donors are cutting aid as casualty rates from violence are climbing, and maternal and infant mortality rates remain among the highest in the world. Civilian casualties in 2013 rose by 14 percent, according to a recent U.N. report.

Christopher Stokes, MSF's general director, said his group wants to "provide a reality check." "With the conflict spreading to once-stable areas of the country and indications that the war will only intensify in many places, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan cannot be overlooked," Stokes said. "With interest in Afghanistan expected to wane after troops withdraw, MSF said it is critical that steps are taken to produce tangible results for Afghans before the world's attention turns away."

"Now is the time to face up to the reality of their situation in order to save lives and alleviate their suffering," Stokes said.



CASSANDRA VINOGRAD/AP

Afghan women and their newborns rest in the maternity ward of Ahmad Shah Baba District Hospital in Kabul on Monday.

Reliable statistics in Afghanistan have failed to come by, in large part due to insecurity gripping many parts of the country.

In an attempt to reconcile the rhetoric and real-life treatment picture for Afghans, MSF surveyed more than 800 patients and their caretakers over a six-month period at the four hospitals where it does work in Afghanistan.

The findings — outlined in the report given to the AP — showed that the majority of people surveyed reported struggles to access medical care, with nearly 20 percent saying a family member or close friend had died in the preceding year due to lack of access.

Nearly half of those surveyed — 49 percent — said the biggest obstacle was related to armed conflict, with high costs and proximity to trustworthy health facilities also posing great challenges.

Patients spoke of clinics without medicine or electricity and selling personal objects to pay for treatments. Others, according to MSF, spoke of watching over sick or injured relatives throughout

the night, hoping they would survive until morning when it might be safer to seek treatment.

Reaching a hospital can mean taking treacherous roads, confronting land mines, dangerous checkpoints, harassment and crossfire — 40 percent of those surveyed by MSF who had reached hospitals had encountered such obstacles.

The battle is only half over for those who reach medical facilities. According to the report, many clinics also lack proper equipment or enough women on staff to tend to female patients.

At the Ahmad Shah Baba Hospital in eastern Kabul, visited by the AP on a recent afternoon, Hatima, 35, sat in the emergency room and tended to her wheezing and feverish 3-year-old niece.

Hatima — who like many Afghans goes by one name — said the family had initially paid for a visit to a private clinic for Basmina, who'd been diagnosed with pneumonia. When the clinic could offer only paracetamol, the family paid for a taxi from outside the capital into Kabul city to the hospital, where MSF works and offers its services free of charge.

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MILITARY

Obama orders plan for withdrawal

President notifies DOD as he pushes Karzai to sign security agreement

By PATRICK DICKSON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama has ordered the Defense Department to begin planning for a full U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan if a key security agreement between the two countries is not signed, the White House announced Tuesday.

In a phone call to Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Obama said that the United States was still willing to negotiate a limited U.S. troop presence to hunt al-Qaida. That will only happen, however, if Afghanistan signs a bilateral security agreement guaranteeing U.S. troops immunity from the Afghan legal system.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Tuesday that the DOD would "move ahead with additional contingency planning to ensure adequate plans are in place to ac-

complish an orderly withdrawal by the end of the year should the United States not keep any troops in Afghanistan after 2014."

While the "zero option" has been discussed by Obama administration officials and military leaders, this is the first time the DOD has formally been told to develop a plan, and is something of an escalation in the war of words with Karzai.

The U.S. has struggled to get a commitment from Karzai on any international agreements that would guarantee immunity for U.S. troops in Afghan courts for actions taken in pursuit of mission goals. After a council of Afghan elders and local leaders approved such an agreement last November, Karzai shocked the international community by refusing to sign it.

Now is the right time to begin planning for a potential full withdrawal, Hagel said.

"This is a prudent step given



Obama

that President Karzai has demonstrated that it is unlikely that he will sign the [BSA], which would provide DOD personnel with critical protections and authorities after 2014," Hagel said in a statement Tuesday.

"I appreciate the efforts of [Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, commander of the International Security Assistance Force] and our military leaders to provide flexibility to the President as we work to determine the future of our presence in Afghanistan."

The White House put out a statement at roughly the same time recapping the call between Obama and Karzai, which covered preparations for Afghan-

istan's coming elections, and peace and reconciliation efforts, in addition to the Bilateral Security Agreement.

"President Obama told President Karzai that because he has demonstrated that it is unlikely that he will sign the BSA, the United States is moving forward with additional contingency planning," the White House statement read. "[T]he longer we go without a BSA, the more likely it will be that any post-2014 U.S. mission will be smaller in scale and ambition."

Hagel was scheduled to talk Tuesday with airmen and soldiers at two bases in Virginia before flying to Brussels for the 2014 NATO Ministerial, which will "look ahead to the Alliance's planned new mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces after 2014."

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Navy relieves commander after frigate runs aground

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The Navy relieved the commander of the USS Taylor on Tuesday, about two weeks after the frigate ran aground in the Black Sea.

Cmdr. Dennis Volpe was relieved by Capt. Jim Aiken, commander of Task Force 65, which controls surface ships in the Navy's 6th Fleet waters in the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean. A preliminary inquiry into the grounding resulted in a "loss of confidence" in Volpe's ability to command, according to a 6th Fleet news release.

Volpe was temporarily reassigned to Destroyer Squadron 14 in Mayport, Fla., Taylor's homeport. His duties as commander of the Taylor are to be assumed by Cmdr. Chris Signa until a permanent replacement can be found, according to the news release. A full investigation into the grounding is underway.

The Taylor ran aground Feb. 12 as it attempted to moor in the Turkish port of Samsun. No one was injured in the incident, and the ship was later able to complete the maneuver without further problems. The ship remains in Samsun for damage inspection and repair, according to 6th Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Phil Rost.

The Taylor and the USS Mount Whitney, an amphibious command ship and the 6th Fleet flagship, entered the Black Sea on Feb. 4 on what the Navy said was a routine and pre-scheduled deployment. The Taylor was scheduled to continue on to 5th Fleet waters in the Middle East. The Pentagon announced the deployment in January, after terrorist groups threatened to disrupt the Olympic Games in Sochi, on Russia's Black Sea coast.

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McKeon: Obama needs to talk more about the war

By C.J. LIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Continuing his criticism that President Barack Obama isn't talking enough about the Afghan War, the retiring chairman of the House Armed Services Committee on Monday lauded the progress troops have made, while emphasizing the need for more support.

Obama "has talked about Afghanistan only a handful of times during his presidency," Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon, R-Calif., said at a National Press Club luncheon. "And each time, President Obama praised his run for the exits or pitied our wounded, instead of lauding the accomplishments of our troops and the importance of the mission they were given to fight."

"[The ANSF] made gains; they built on those gains, and they secured those gains," McKeon said. "These guys were taking their

baby steps not five years ago. Today, they're holding onto territory that took a 50-nation coalition to win."

As a result, Afghanistan has made the largest gains in basic health and development factors in the world in the last decade, to where 60 percent of the population now have cellphones and 65 percent have Internet access, according to McKeon.

The Afghan Ministry of Education estimates that nearly 8 million children are in school, up from 1 million in 2001, and there are now more than 13,000 general education schools in the country. The state of women's rights is also improving, with more than 40,000 females now attending school, he said.

Despite the gains, American support for the Afghan War continues to dwindle, which McKeon blamed on what he calls Obama's avoidance of speaking publicly about the war. A Gallup poll last



McKeon

week found that most Americans now believe the Afghan War was a mistake, whereas less than 30 percent thought so at the start of Obama's presidency in 2009.

"Counterinsurgencies have two fronts — the one out there, and the one right here," McKeon said. "The troops have held their line out there. The president has not held the line here."

"It's not much to ask that, every once in a while, we hear from our commander in chief," he said. "We deserve to hear about the steps forward. We deserve to hear, and understand, why we fight."

The White House responded that the president has spoken about Afghanistan on several occasions, including the highest-profile occasion, the State of the Union speech in January.

"My fellow Americans, no other country in the world does what we do," Obama said then. "As this time of war draws to a close, a new generation of heroes returns to civilian life. ... We'll keep working to help all our veterans translate their skills and leadership into jobs here at home. And we will all continue to join forces to honor and support our remarkable military families."

The administration needs to

focus less on talking about withdrawing military forces, McKeon said, because U.S. support is still needed in Afghanistan to complete its mission of creating a stable and sustainable government well after troops are gone.

"Put plainly, without our support — and that support includes presence and money — the Afghan Security Forces can't execute," McKeon said, pointing out how gains in Iraq have unraveled because troops were in a rush to leave. "But filling these gaps doesn't mean that America's sons and daughters will be stuck on the front lines forever."

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NATION



ROB O'NEAL, FLORIDA KEYS NEWS BUREAU/AP

Key spot for scoping out stars

Tedda Howard focuses her telescope on Jupiter during the 30th Winter Star Party in Scout Key, Fla., on Monday. More than 500 amateur and professional astronomers are in the lower Florida Keys to observe southern constellations, stars and planets under the Keys' optimal viewing conditions.

High court divided in climate case

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court appeared divided on Monday over the sole Obama administration program already in place to limit power plant and factory emissions of gases blamed for global warming.

The justices took on a small, complicated piece of the politically charged issue of cutting greenhouse gas emissions in an extended argument that included references to Dunkin' Donuts stores, football games and light bulbs. The examples were meant to illustrate the vast potential reach of the program, in its critics' view, or its limited nature, as the administration argued.

The presence of Senate Repub-

lican Leader Mitch McConnell, of Kentucky, in the courtroom underscored the political stakes in President Barack Obama's high-profile effort to deal with global warming — a policy Obama is pursuing after failing to persuade Congress to enact climate change legislation. McConnell is facing a tough re-election fight in which he refers often to the administration's assault on the coal industry in Kentucky and elsewhere.

The court's liberal justices seemed comfortable with the scope of an Environmental Protection Agency permitting program that applies to companies that want to expand facilities or build new ones that would increase overall pollution. Under the program, the companies must

evaluate ways to reduce the carbon they release. Carbon dioxide is the chief greenhouse gas.

However, conservative members of the bench indicated they're skeptical of the EPA's authority, with Justice Anthony Kennedy as the probable decisive vote. Kennedy seemed most interested in making clear that EPA would retain the ability to combat climate change under earlier high court rulings, regardless of the outcome of this case.

Both sides acknowledged on Monday that the result would not impede EPA's proposal of first-time national standards for new power plants or its regulations for existing plants expected to be proposed this summer.

GOP senators: Vets' wish list bill too pricey

By KEVIN FREEKING
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It's hard to vote against veterans these days.

Majority Leader Harry Reid is counting on voters as well as lawmakers feeling that way in an election year as the Senate takes up legislation this week that addresses dozens of priorities that veterans groups have raised in recent years.

Two weeks after rolling back an effort to slow cost-of-living pension increases for working-age military retirees, the Senate is now being asked to give veterans new benefits that would cost \$21 billion over the next decade.

The bill would make more veterans eligible for VA health care, require public colleges to offer in-state tuition rates to all veterans and help seriously wounded veterans get fertility treatments.

The vote could put Senate Republicans in the uncomfortable position of saying no to a politically powerful constituency in a midterm election year. Some Republicans gripe that the new programs would further swell federal deficits.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, the bill's author and the chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, has gained the endorsement of myriad veterans groups to generate momentum for his bill. Sanders, Reid and other Democrats are counting on public support for the measure despite GOP criticism.

The American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America and

Veterans of Foreign Wars were just some of the groups that lined up beside Sanders recently to tout the proposed new benefits. In summary, said Ray Kelley, the VFW's legislative director, "there is something in this bill for every generation of veterans."

Republicans so far have focused their criticism on the bill's cost and how to pay for it — by capping the fund that pays for overseas wars and diverting that money toward veterans' health care and benefits. Republican senators said that relying on less war spending doesn't represent true savings. They say the money wouldn't have been spent anyway.

The bill has included language eliminating a planned slowing of annual increases in many military retirees' pensions. President Barack Obama recently signed separate legislation restoring that money for all who served in the military before this year, so Sanders, I-Vt., plans to amend the measure to avert the cuts for those joining the services this year and in the future, too.

At this point, GOP senators are mostly focusing their concerns on the terms of the debate.

"I think I have as good a knowledge of veterans issues as Sen. Sanders does, so therefore, I think I should be able to debate and amend as I choose to do so," said Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. "If Sen. Reid blocks that ability, then I'm not conducive to allowing just a rubberstamp to take place."

Study: Centralizing organ removal may benefit transplants

The Associated Press

For decades, surgeons have traveled to far-off hospitals to remove organs from brain-dead donors and then rushed back to transplant them. Now an experiment in the Midwest suggests

there may be a better way: Bring the donors to the doctors instead.

A study out Tuesday reports on liver transplants from the nation's first free-standing organ retrieval center. Nearly all organ donors now are transported to Mid-America Transplant Services

in St. Louis from a region including parts of Missouri, Illinois and Arkansas.

Removing organs at this central location near the four hospitals that do transplants saves money, the study found. The livers spent less time outside the

donor's body, which at least in theory improves the odds of success. Doctors also think they are getting more usable organs from each donor, though this study looked only at livers.

Transplant experts say this could become a new standard.

"It's kind of a foreign concept so it's taken some time for this to catch on, but I think it will," said Dr. William Chapman, a transplant surgeon at Washington University in St. Louis, which uses the Mid-America center. "It makes so much sense."

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NATION

Health officials are baffled by polio-like illness

By MARTHA MENDOZA
The Associated Press

STANFORD, Calif. — An extremely rare, polio-like disease has appeared in more than a dozen California children within the past year, and each of them suffered paralysis to one or more arms or legs, Stanford University researchers say. Public health officials haven't identified any common causes connecting the cases.

The illness is still being investigated and appears to be very unusual, but Dr. Keith Van Haren at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University warned Monday that any child showing a sudden onset of weakness in their limbs or symptoms of paralysis should be immediately seen by a doctor.

"The disease resembles but is not the same as polio," he said. "But this is serious. Most of the children we've seen so far have not recovered use of their arm or their leg."

Doctors are not sure if it's a virus or something else, he said. Van Haren said he has studied five cases from Monterey up through the San Francisco Bay Area, including two who were identified

with the disease enterovirus-68, which is from the same family as the polio viruses. He said there have been about 20 cases statewide.

"We want to temper the concern, because at the moment it does not appear to represent a major epidemic but only a very rare phenomenon," he said, noting similar outbreaks in Asia and Australia.

For some children, like Sofia Jarvis, 4, of Berkeley, rare doesn't mean safe.

She first developed what looked like asthma two years ago, but then her left arm stopped moving, and has remained paralyzed ever since.

"You can imagine. We had two boys that are very healthy and Sofia was healthy until that point," said her mother, Jessica Tomei. "We did not realize what we were in store for. We did not realize her arm would be permanently paralyzed."

Dr. Jane Seward of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta said Monday that the research is not identified any common causes that suggest that the cases are linked, said Dr.



MARTHA MENDOZA/AP

Jessica Tomei holds her daughter, Sofia Jarvis, 4, during a news conference at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., on Monday. Sofia is one of a handful of California children who have been diagnosed with a rare polio-like syndrome.

cause childhood paralysis.

Any of a number of illnesses could be at work, and it's possible some of the cases had one infection and some had another. Regarding the presence of EV-68 in at least two cases, "it could be an incidental finding," Seward said.

The California Department of Public Health has not identified any common causes that suggest that the cases are linked, said Dr.

Gil Chavez, the deputy director of the Center for Infectious Disease and state epidemiologist.

"Physicians and public health officials who have encountered similar illnesses have submitted 20 reports to CDC, and CDC has conducted preliminary tests on 15 of these specimens," he said. "Thus far, the department has not identified any common causes that suggest that the cases are linked."

FDA is urged to add bold testosterone drug warning

By MATTHEW PERRONE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A consumer advocacy group is calling on the Food and Drug Administration to add a bold warning label to popular testosterone drugs for men in light of growing evidence that the hormone treatments can increase the risk of heart attack.

The group Public Citizen says the agency should immediately add a "black box" warning — the most serious type — to all testosterone medications and require manufacturers to warn physicians about a higher risk of heart attack, stroke and death with the treatments.

The FDA announced last month that it was reviewing the safety of drugs like the blockbuster testosterone gel, AndroGel, in light of two recent studies that showed higher rates of cardiovascular problems in men. The agency said its review was first prompted by a U.S. Veterans Affairs study published in November 2013 that showed a 30 percent increase in stroke, heart attack and death among older men taking testosterone.

In January, a federally funded study of 45,000 men suggested testosterone therapy could double the risk of heart attacks in men 65 and older.

Public Citizen says studies published as early as 2010 should have prompted FDA action.

"It is quite clear that testosterone treatment increases the risks of cardiovascular diseases, including heart attacks," said Dr. Sidney Wolfe, of Public Citizen's health group.

In his petition to the FDA, Wolfe pointed to an analysis of 27 testosterone trials published last April.

The researchers found that while 13 studies funded by drug companies did not show an increase in heart problems, 14 non-industry funded trials showed a two-fold increase in risk in heart problems.

Fed rules to bar school promotion of junk food, sugar

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Even the scoreboards in high school gyms eventually will have to promote good health.

Moving beyond the lunch line, new rules that will be proposed Tuesday by the White House and the Agriculture Department would limit marketing of unhealthy foods in schools. They would phase out the advertising of sugary drinks and junk foods around campuses

during the school day and ensure that other promotions in schools are in line with health standards that already apply to school foods.

That means a scoreboard at a high school football or basketball game eventually wouldn't be allowed to advertise Coca-Cola, for example, but it could advertise Diet Coke or Dasani water, which is also owned by Coca-Cola Co. Same with the front of a vending machine. Cups, posters and menu boards that advertise foods that

don't meet the standards would also be phased out.

Ninety percent of such marketing in schools is related to beverages, and many soda companies already have started to transition their sales and advertising in schools from sugary sodas and sports drinks to their own health products.

The proposed rules are part of first lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move initiative to combat child obesity, which is celebrating its

fourth anniversary this week. Obama and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will announce the new rules at a White House event.

"When parents are working hard at home, they need to rest assured that those efforts aren't being undone when kids are out of their control at school," Sam Kass, White House senior nutrition policy adviser, said.

The rules also would allow more children access to fresh lunches.



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WORLD

Ukraine delays forming new government

By MARIA DANILOVA
AND JIM HEINTZ
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — The Ukrainian parliament on Tuesday delayed the formation of a new government, reflecting political tensions and economic challenges after the Russia-backed president went into hiding.

Parliament speaker Oleksandr Turchynov, who was named Ukraine's interim leader after President Viktor Yanukovych fled the capital, said a new government should be in place by Thursday, instead of Tuesday, as

he had earlier indicated.

Turchynov is now nominally in charge of this strategic country of 46 million whose ailing economy faces the risk of default and whose loyalties are sharply torn between Europe and longtime ruler Russia.

Law enforcement agencies have issued an arrest warrant for Yanukovych over the killing of 82 people, mainly protesters — the bloodiest violence in Ukraine's post-Soviet history — that precipitated him fleeing the capital on Friday after signing a deal with opposition leaders to end months of violent clashes between pro-

testers and police.

Yanukovych's former chief of staff, Andriy Klyuyev, was wounded by gunfire and hospitalized Monday, his spokesman told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Artem Petrenko also confirmed that Klyuyev resigned his post a day before the shooting. Klyuyev was among the figures most despised by protesters in Ukraine's three-month political turmoil.

For months, thousands of people have been protesting against Yanukovych's decision to ditch an agreement for closer ties with the European Union and turn to Rus-

sia instead.

The parliament sacked some of Yanukovych's lieutenants and named their replacement, but it has yet to appoint the new premier and fill all remaining government posts. Yanukovych's whereabouts are unknown. He was last reportedly seen in the Crimea, a pro-Russia area.

The European Union's top foreign policy official urged Ukraine's new government to work out a reform program so the West could consider financial aid to the country's battered economy.

Catherine Ashton spoke Tues-

day after meeting with the leaders of Ukraine's interim authorities formed after Yanukovych fled the capital.

Arseniy Yatsenyuk, a top figure in the protests, suggested that Yanukovych should be tried in the Hague, Netherlands.

Protesters, meanwhile, removed a Soviet star from the top of the Ukrainian parliament building, the Verkhovna Rada.

"The star on top of the Verkhovna Rada is no longer there," said Oleh Tyahnybok, head of the nationalist Svoboda party, which has been a strong force in the protest movement.

Homosexuals outed by Ugandan paper

The Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda — A Ugandan newspaper published a list Tuesday of what it called the country's "200 top" homosexuals, outing some Ugandans who previously had not identified themselves as gay one day after the president enacted a harsh anti-gay law.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Monday's signing of the bill by President Yoweri Museveni marked "a tragic day for Uganda and for all who care about the cause of human rights" and warned that Washington could cut aid to the government of the East African nation.

"Now that this law has been enacted, we are beginning an internal review of our relationship with the Government of Uganda to ensure that all dimensions of our engagement, including assistance programs, uphold our anti-discrimination policies and

principles and reflect our values," Kerry said in a statement.

The Red Pepper tabloid published the names — and some pictures — of alleged homosexuals in a front-page story under the headline: "EXPOSED!"

The list included prominent Ugandan gay activists such as Pepe Julian Onziema, who has repeatedly warned that Uganda's new anti-gay law could spark violence against homosexuals. A popular Ugandan hip-hop star and a Catholic priest are also on the list.

Few Ugandans identify themselves publicly as gay, and the tabloid's publication of alleged homosexuals recalled a similar list published in 2011 by a now-defunct tabloid that called for the execution of gays. A Ugandan judge later condemned the outing of homosexuals in a country where gays face severe discrimination, saying it amounted to an invasion of privacy.



AP

Leopard on the loose

An Indian man moves out of the way of a leopard on Sunday in the northern Indian city of Meerut. Forestry officials and police armed with tranquilizer darts searched for the leopard that injured six people as it wandered through an army hospital and a crowded market, setting off a minor stampede, police said.

Al-Qaida group warned in Syria

The Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — The leader of a powerful al-Qaida-linked group in Syria gave a rival breakaway group a five-day ultimatum to accept arbitration by leading clerics to end infighting or be expelled from the region.

The ultimatum was issued by Nusra Front leader Abu Mohammed al-Golani in an audio message in which he warned the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant that it would be driven both from Syria and "even from Iraq" if it rejected the results of arbitration.

The audio message was produced by Nusra Front's media arm al-Manara al-Bayda and was posted on militant websites Tuesday, two days after the kill-

ing of Abu Khaled al-Suri, who acted as al-Qaida chief Ayman al-Zawahiri's representative in Syria. He was believed to be assassinated by two suicide bombers from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Heavy clashes between the group and other rebel factions in opposition-held northern and eastern Syria have killed hundreds of people since the beginning of the year and undermined the fight to topple President Bashar Assad.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant has angered other factions with its brutal tactics and campaign to Islamize areas under its control in the northeast.

"We are waiting for your official answer within five days of

issuing this statement," al-Golani warned the group, adding that Syrians have been putting up with its aggression for a year.

"By God, if you reject God's judgment again, and do not stop your arrogant overlordship over the Muslim nation, then (we) will be forced to launch an assault against this aggressive, ignorant ideology and will expel it, even from Iraq," he said.

Al-Golani suggested the arbitration be conducted by three senior al-Qaida ideologists, including one serving a prison sentence and another standing trial on terrorism charges in Jordan.

He did not say how the two will handle the arbitration while they are in detention.

Witnesses: Nigeria militants kill dozens in college attack

The Associated Press

DAMATURU, Nigeria — Suspected Islamic militants killed dozens of students in a pre-dawn attack Tuesday on a northeast Nigerian college, survivors said, setting ablaze a locked hostel and shooting and slitting the throats of those who escaped through windows. Some were burned alive.

Adamu Garba said he and other teachers who ran away through the bush estimate 40 students died in the assault that began around 2 a.m. Tuesday at the Federal Government College at Buni Yadi. It is a co-ed school about 45 miles south of Damaturu, the capital of Yobe state, and difficult to communicate with because extremists last year destroyed the cellphone tower there.

Soldiers still were gathering

corpses so military spokesman Capt. Eli Lazarus said he could not give an exact number of dead.

Garba, who teaches at a secondary school attached to the college, said the attackers first set ablaze the college administrative block, then moved to the hostels, where they locked students in and started firebombing the buildings.

At one hostel, he said, "students were trying to climb out of the windows and they were slaughtered like sheep by the terrorists who slit their throats. Others who ran were gunned down." He said students who could not escape were burned alive.

He spoke to The Associated Press in Damaturu, where he and several other teachers had made their way.

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OPINION

Don't create a new Freddie, Fannie

By NORBERT J. MICHEL

Does the housing finance system require government guarantees? We've often told it's worked so well for so long, reforms should only tweak things. The market won't survive, it's said, if we completely eliminate those guarantees.

The reality is that if the system had worked, we wouldn't have had millions of home foreclosures. Taxpayers wouldn't have spent \$200 billion to save the government-sponsored enterprises Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

We tend to have short memories. The Fannie and Freddie that crashed in 2008 was a product of the mid/late 1990s, not the 1930s. Not even in the depths of the Great Depression did government policy go so far to distort private markets.

So it was encouraging to have President Barack Obama late last year support shutting down Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the two enterprises that helped create that distortion.

But the devil is always in the details, especially in politics. So taxpayers should be aware that some of the same politicians who want to close down Fannie and Freddie also want to restart them under a new name.

The bill sponsored by Sens. Mark Warner, D-Va., and Bob Corker, R-Tenn., for instance, would close down Fannie and Freddie. But then it would create the Federal Mortgage Insurance Corp., a government agency that purchases home loans to provide liquidity for a secondary mortgage market. Sound familiar?

The FMIC itself wouldn't issue mortgage-backed securities, but it would provide an explicit taxpayer guarantee to mortgage-backed security holders against losses. In its current form, 90 percent of those losses would be insured and covered by a mortgage insurance fund very similar to the FDIC's deposit insurance fund.

Perhaps it's worth considering whether these affordable housing programs haven't improved housing markets.

The main difference between the proposed FMIC and the current government-sponsored enterprises? Approximately 10 percent. Of course, that 90 percent "risk sharing" figure will likely have to grow for the bill to make it out of the Senate. There's also the detail that the FMIC will serve as a new federal regulator in the housing finance market. That's hardly an improvement over the old system.

In a similarly stealthy manner, Corker and Warner can happily tell constituents their bill eliminates the much-maligned affordable housing goals. It does, but it replaces them by tasking the FMIC with an even broader "duty to serve" all markets.

The basic idea is the same as the affordable housing goals: Lenders have a responsibility to lend money to virtually everyone. Market economies provide benefits to people when business owners earn profits, not when they have a specific duty to serve government mandates and social causes. Focusing on the latter has made our financial system less stable and needlessly saddled many Americans with enormous debts.

There's very little to show for all this trouble. When the GSEs started in 1968, the homeownership rate was 64 percent. Although U.S. mortgage debt has grown by more than 80 percent during this time, the homeownership rate now stands at 65 percent.

That's not enough to deter opponents of ending the GSEs. Some even use figures like this to argue for expanding taxpayer-funded "affordable housing" programs (though many of them are hardly affordable in the long run).

Corker-Warner expands those programs

by enlarging two housing trust funds, both of which would provide a guaranteed source of taxpayer dollars for affordable-housing projects. Combined, the funds would provide approximately \$350 million in the first year they're operated, and the amount would climb annually.

That's still not enough for some. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan recently called for a national affordable-housing fund of \$5 billion — that's with a b — per year. What Donovan and other affordable-housing groups always neglect to say, though, is that we already transfer more than \$50 billion per year in federal tax dollars to various affordable-housing programs.

Since 2000, taxpayers have spent more than \$630 billion on those initiatives (a figure that does not include programs through state and local trust funds, GSE subsidies, Ginnie Mae, FHA or VA subsidies). Perhaps it's worth considering whether all these affordable housing programs haven't improved housing markets.

Removing the government guarantee from housing finance would likely bring lower housing costs, less personal debt, and higher personal income and savings. The government guarantees we've had in the U.S. housing market have distorted housing prices, encouraged debt, left taxpayers on the hook for trillions, and provided the impetus for millions of home foreclosures.

With that sort of record, it shouldn't take this long to shut the GSEs down. Permanently.

Norbert J. Michel is a research fellow in financial regulations in The Heritage Foundation's Rose Institute for Economic Policy Studies.

Take it slow when tinkering with our DNA

Los Angeles Times editorial

The manipulation of human genes could lead to profound advances in our ability to cure or prevent terrible diseases. In some cases, it might also mean introducing genetic material that could be passed from one generation to the next, changing the human gene pool in a manner that could inadvertently harm people's health.

Such "inheritable" DNA is a hotly debated issue among bioethicists, and one that an advisory committee of the Food and Drug Administration will review Tuesday and Wednesday as it considers whether human trials should be allowed for a new therapy that could prevent a rare but devastating inherited disorder.

Mitochondrial disease involves the specialized compartments within human cells that are responsible for creating most of the energy needed by the body. When a person's mitochondria are faulty, the resulting disorder can be disabling or fatal, with symptoms that can include loss of

motor control, muscle weakness and pain, cardiac or liver disease, seizures, respiratory difficulty and susceptibility to infection. It is passed on to a child through the mother's mitochondria.

Researchers working with animals have devised a possible solution. A donor egg with healthy mitochondria is used, but the nucleus is removed and replaced with the nucleus from an egg of the afflicted mother; the egg is then fertilized in vitro. Because all but a minuscule amount of human DNA is contained in the nucleus, the child would be almost entirely the genetic offspring of the original couple. Because a bit of genetic material comes from the donor's mitochondria, the procedure is sometimes called "three-parent IVF."

The procedure is intended to allow afflicted women to bear healthy children who could have their own children and grandchildren without the need for such a procedure. If approved, it would be the first time scientists were changing the genetic material of humans in a way that could be passed down through the generations.

The European Union takes a dim view of research that aims to change the genes of future generations. Although researchers in Oregon successfully produced several rhesus monkeys using the mitochondrial procedure, an attempt to use the same process to create human embryos resulted in half of the eggs undergoing abnormal fertilization. Such embryos would certainly not have been implanted in a human trial.

Critics also point out that the monkeys born through the procedure have not yet reproduced or lived out their life cycles. What if problems show up later in their lives, or in their offspring?

Considering these caveats, it seems far too early for the FDA to even consider allowing human trials. But it should encourage researchers to continue exploring the keys that might unlock gene-based cures. It is vital to proceed with extreme caution on research that involves possible permanent changes in the human genome, but it also would be a shame to shut off all hope of preventing suffering because of possibly unfounded fears about gene-based cures.

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OPINION

5 ways Ukraine may be a game changer

By TIMOTHY GARTON ASH

Byond the burning barricades and the corpses in the streets, here is what is at stake in Ukraine's insurrectionary drama.

The future of Ukraine as an independent state-nation. Intense violence inside a state, still falling short of civil war, can go two sharply different ways. It can tear the state apart, as in Syria and the former Yugoslavia, or, if people join hands to retreat from the brink, it can weld a state-nation together, as in South Africa. A state-nation has a shared civic national identity rather than a single ethnic national identity.

One reason that the last months in Ukraine have been so chaotic is that Ukraine, despite being an independent state for more than two decades, is neither a fully functioning state nor a fully formed nation. To use the phrase "law and order" to describe any of what happened in Ukraine last week is like using "tea and sandwiches" to describe hooch made of vodka, gristle and blood. President Viktor Yanukovich is a thug, but he is also an ineffective thug. Effective and disciplined security forces would not be randomly shooting and killing demonstrators in the street one minute and abandoning the same streets the next.

Silarily, the administration, parliament and the army are more like those of a normal European state. They are infiltrated and manipulated to an extraordinary degree by oligarchs, cro-

nies and the president's family, aka the Family. To give just one example, according to the Ukrainian edition of Forbes magazine, Yanukovich's son, a dentist, won 50 percent of all state contracts in January — possibly the biggest state extraction in history.

This, as well as militia brutality, is what many Ukrainians are so angry about, and what some have given their lives to change. But if last week's deal — for a coalition government, constitutional reform to give parliament back more powers and a presidential election before the end of the year — can be made to stick, then these bloody days could yet go down in history books as a decisive chapter in Ukraine's path to independent state-nationhood. If not, further disintegration looms.

The future of Russia as a state-nation — or an empire. With Ukraine, Russia is still an empire; without Ukraine, Russia itself has a chance to become a state-nation. The future of Ukraine is more central to Russia's national identity than Scotland's is to England's. Centuries ago, people who lived in the territory that is now Ukraine were the original Russians, and that is what the people who call themselves Ukrainians will shape the future definition of what is now Russia.

The future of Vladimir Putin. Konstantin von Eggert, an independent Russian journalist, once said that the most interesting event in Russian politics over the last decade did not happen in Russia. It was the Orange Revolution of 2004 in Ukraine. That seemed

to Putin's regime to be the most threatening in the 15-year wave of velvet or color revolutions that started in central Europe in 1989.

So Putin's "political technologies" developed techniques to counter them. These involved brutality, of course, but also lots of money, GONGOS (government-organized nongovernmental organizations) and media manipulation that makes Tony Blair's spin doctor, Alastair Campbell, look like the archbishop of Canterbury. When Putin trumped the European Union's rule-rich but cash-poor association offer to Ukraine with a cool \$15 billion, one Russian political technologist, Marat Gelman, tweeted, "Maidan installation sold for \$15 billion — most expensive art object ever." (Maidan is Kiev's Independence Square, epicenter of the protests.)

But it didn't quite go according to plan. So Putin and Yanukovich met in Sochi, Russia, and then on Monday, Russia released more of the \$15 billion, and on Tuesday, Yanukovich's militia started using live ammunition against increasingly desperate and sometimes violent protesters. That Putin was prepared to risk international blowback during his treasured Sochi Olympics shows how vital Ukraine is to him. Now he has retreated tactically, faced with the facts on the ground; but he has visions that he will stop intervening.

The future of Europe as a strategic power. The geopolitical issue here is not whether Ukraine joins



Europe or Russia. It is whether Ukraine becomes increasingly integrated into the political and economic community of Europe, as well as having a very close relationship with Russia. It is also whether the EU will stand up for basic European values on its own front doorstep, as it failed to do in Bosnia 20 years ago.

It is now clear that the EU miscalculated by delivering an us-or-them ultimatum last autumn without offering Ukraine desperately needed ready cash or the clear and certain prospect of EU membership. As the Ukraine expert Andrew Wilson notes, the EU took a baguette to a knife fight. In recent weeks, it has done better. The deal signed Friday was a real success for the personal diplomacy of the German, Polish and French foreign ministers, and the agreement to release

Yulia Tymoshenko was another positive sign. But does a Europe weakened by the eurozone crisis have the strategic imagination and resolve for the long term?

The future of revolution. I have argued that, in our time, 1989 supplanted 1789 as the default model of revolution. Rather than progressive radicalization, violence and the guillotine, we look for peaceful mass protest followed by negotiated transition. That model has taken a battering of late, not only in Ukraine but also in the violent fall that followed the Arab Spring. If this fragile deal holds, however, and the fury on the streets can be contained, Europe might again show that we can occasionally learn from history.

Timothy Garton Ash is professor of European studies at Oxford University and a fellow at the Hoover Institution. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

No need to play games with West Point standards

By DWIGHT S. MEARS

On Dec. 15, shortly after Army football's 12th consecutive loss to the U.S. Naval Academy, the superintendent of West Point, Lt. Gen. Robert Caslen, announced that he was considering institutional changes to build a winning program. "When America puts its sons and daughters in harm's way, they do not expect us to just 'do our best' ... but to win," he wrote. "Nothing short of victory accepts no excuses." Our core values are Duty, Honor, Country. Winning makes them real."

Soon after, Army Athletic Director Boo Corrigan argued that West Point ought to take "an educated risk" by relaxing admission requirements in favor of superior football recruits. The superintendent has said that he does not intend to relax standards, but Corrigan's views are backed by powerful alumni, including retired Brig. Gen. Pete Dawkins, a Heisman Trophy winner who has participated in three study groups assessing Army football.

"I think it's crucial that West Point stand out as a place of winners," Dawkins recently said. Thus his view that it's "entirely fair to accept some risks" in the admission of football recruits.

As a West Point graduate and

faculty member, I find many of these arguments troubling. Academy leaders and alumni have often asserted that performance on the gridiron has a direct impact on our ability to win our nation's wars and that we therefore have a moral imperative to win in football. The facts do not support that assertion.

West Point's mission standards are already relaxed for recruited athletes. Sixty-one percent of West Point's current football players matriculated through the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School, where academic risk thresholds are significantly lower than for standard academy admissions, and virtually everyone who completes the coursework enters the academy.

Internal studies conducted in the past decade show that, once at West Point, recruited football players are more than twice as likely to fail courses, more likely to leave the Army early and less likely to be promoted to higher ranks in the Army compared with their nonrecruited counterparts.

There are exceptions, of course, and I have taught some outstanding football players. Yet the aggregate numbers demonstrate that loosening academic standards runs counter to the academy's mission to prepare each graduate "for a career of professional ex-

cellence and service to the Nation as an officer in the United States Army."

Certainly West Point has a legitimate interest in its teams being competitive. It has a far greater interest, however, in producing the best possible officers for long-term service in the Army. Does it really matter to America's soldiers whether West Point had a winning football record? And why is football the only sport with this analogy to combat?

In 1940, West Point Superintendent Brig. Gen. Robert Eichelberger invoked almost the same argument to reverse Army football's abysmal performance, which he saw as a harbinger of failure in World War II. Eichelberger allowed a new football coach, Earl Blaik, to recruit players of lesser academic ability, including transfers from other colleges.

Blaik famously rallied his national championship squads of 1944 and 1945 under Gen. Douglas MacArthur's dictum that "there is no substitute for victory." (Today's rallying cry, "nothing short of victory is acceptable," is an intentional rewording of that phrase.)

In 1951, MacArthur learned that there was indeed a substitute for victory when he was fired for using the phrase to criticize

President Harry Truman's Korean War aims. Only a few weeks later, 37 of Blaik's players were expelled for operating a cheating ring. An internal report concluded that the fundamental cause was "a misalignment of values in the implementation of the mission of the Military Academy," specifically, "an over-emphasis on football."

West Point leaders often quote MacArthur to emphasize the value of competitive sports because, while superintendent from 1919 to 1922, he mandated intramural athletics for all cadets, seeking to provide "the undoubted advantages" of intercollegiate sports to the entire academy. That frequently overshadows the fact that MacArthur simultaneously oversaw reinstatement of a four-year academic curriculum, a far more important reform.

The true architect of athletic reforms at West Point was Capt. Herman Koehler, who oversaw cadet physical training from 1885 to 1923. Koehler believed that cadets should engage in competitive athletics "not for the sake of representing the Academy on any particular team, but for the good the individual gets out of them." In his view, "if indulgence in athletics is to be confined to a limited few, ... and if winning is to be made the sole and only desider-

atum, then athletics fail of their object."

In "Carved From Granite: West Point Since 1902," historian Lance Betros demonstrated that Koehler's warning went unheeded. Emphasis on intercollegiate athletics over the past decade has diverted scarce resources away from the military and physical training of other cadets.

Betros also documented the "ferocity" of alumni that makes constructive reform unlikely.

West Point's academic reputation has fared better than many institutions that insist on competing at the top levels of college football. As the sport becomes increasingly professionalized, victory inevitably comes at a higher academic cost.

Even if standards are preserved amid this pressure, questions remain about the appropriate emphasis placed on football at a service academy and whether West Point has already compromised too much in the pursuit of gridiron glory.

Dwight S. Mears is an assistant professor of history at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Army, the Defense Department or the U.S. government. This column first appeared in the Washington Post.

WORLD

Rays of hope

Indonesia takes steps to protect manta rays, which are worth much more alive than dead

‘If managed properly, Indonesia could become the top manta tourism destination on the planet.’

Agus Dermawan
director of the
country's Marine
Conservation
Directorate

By MARGIE MASON
The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesia is now the world's largest sanctuary for manta rays, after officials were persuaded by evidence that the gentle giants known for delighting tourists are worth more alive than dead.

The government on Feb. 21 announced that manta rays within the archipelago's 2.2 million square miles of ocean will be protected from fishing and export. It will take time and cooperation at multiple levels to enforce the ban on poaching in the biggest global shark and ray fishery.

Conservationists point to simple economics as an incentive. According to a study published last year in the online journal PLoS One, a manta ray is worth up to \$1 million over the course of its long lifetime, thanks to tourists willing to pay generously for a chance to swim with the curious creatures that glide gracefully through the water by flapping their wide wings, almost as if flying.

They are worth only \$40 to \$500 dead.

Government officials were “so surprised that the tourism value is very

high. That's a very powerful argument,” said Tiene Gunawan, marine program director at Conservation International Indonesia. “Indonesia is such a big, big, big country. When looking at the size of the water, it's huge. And I think we should start small and make some kind of pilot for this enforcement.”

The regulation was passed Jan. 27. Conservation groups are working to teach fishermen about the value of keeping the mantas alive, while businesspeople, the military, water police and local officials are being engaged to assist.

“There are more than 200 special policemen who have been prepared to guard conservation areas and to enforce the law on protection of this species,” Sudirman Saad, director general for marine, coastal and small islands, said during a news conference announcing the protections. He said the government will encourage fishermen affected by the ban to take advantage of manta ray tourism.

In some areas, including a well-known spot near the resort island of Bali, locals are already seeing profits from taking snorkelers out on their fishing boats, or working at larger resorts where mantas are a top attraction. In Indonesia, manta tourism brings in an estimated \$15 million each year, according to the PLoS One report.

“Indonesia now has the second-largest manta ray tourism industry in the world,” Agus Dermawan, director of the country's Marine Conservation Directorate, said in a statement. “Given the huge area of reefs and islands in our country, if managed properly, Indonesia could become the top manta tourism destination on the planet.”

Two types of rays exist in Indonesia, the manta and the mobula. Both are killed for their plankton-filtering gills, which are used for medicinal concoctions, mainly in China. Mantas are also frequently caught accidentally by fishermen, but they are not part of a major targeted industry in Indonesia as in other countries, such as Sri Lanka, Gunawan said.

Increased demand has led to a sharp drop in manta numbers, raising international concern.

Virgin Group founder Richard Branson has sounded alarms through the “Manta Ray of Hope” project.

Last year the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora imposed new trade regulations for the species.

Mantas are among the world's largest fish and can reach up to 26 feet from wingtip to wingtip. Found in the tropics, they can live up to 50 years, but do not mature until age 8 to 10 and typically give birth to one pup only every two to five years. That slow reproduction rate means fishing cannot be sustained over the long haul, and mantas are classified as vulnerable to extinction on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species.

Mantas are smart and capable of migrating more than 600 miles, and each has a unique pattern of spots on its belly. Unlike stingrays, they have no barbs and are harmless to humans.

Even though they are beloved by divers and snorkelers, due to their size, friendliness and graceful beauty in the water, much remains unknown about their population numbers worldwide.

Early last year, Indonesia's Institute of Science estimated that the country has 17,000 mantas rays, though it said that approximation did not account for regional migrations and may be overly optimistic.

In addition to Indonesia, manta fishing is banned in Australia, Ecuador, the European Union, Mexico, New Zealand, the Philippines, Guam, the Micronesian island of Yap, the Northern Mariana Islands, Hawaii and Florida.

A manta ray swims off the Raja Ampat islands in Indonesia. Indonesia is now the world's largest sanctuary for manta rays.

Hermin Harsoyo/AP



WIRED WORLD



PHOTOS BY JEFF CHIU/AP

From left, participants Ian Wong, Willy Chu, Yuriko Tamura and Steve Nguyen meet during a coding and team formation session Feb. 8 at FinCapDev San Francisco Hackathon in San Francisco.

A growing trend, 'hackathons' spur computer whizzes to innovate

BY MARTHA MENDOZA
The Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — It used to be that "hacking" was just a type of crime, a computer break-in. Today, the term is also part of a growing — and perfectly legal — mainstay of the tech sector.

Computer programming competitions known as "hackathons" have spread like viruses in recent years as ways for geeks, nerds and designers to get together to eat pizza, lose sleep and create something new.

The formal, marathon, group brainstorming sessions are focused on everything from developing lucrative apps to using computer code to solve the world's problems. This year, a record 1,500 hackathons are planned around the globe, up from just a handful in 2010.

"A hackathon is the fastest way to actually do something about an idea," said Nima Adelhkani, organizer of the weekendlong Hack for Peace in the Middle East competition in San Francisco this month.

Law enforcement has not abandoned the term. Dozens of federally convicted "hackers" are serving prison sentences for computer fraud and other cybercrimes. The Justice Department's cybercrime budget this year is \$9 million to target offenses that include hacking.

But the new uses have popped up with increasing frequency since a pair of tech events in 1999 in which developers worked together to write programs. Yahoo gets recognition for the first offi-

cial hackathon in 2005.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg largely has been credited with helping broaden the definitions by urging his staff to "hack" by "building something quickly or 'building the boundaries of what can be done.'"

A new Facebook option that went live Thursday allowing users more than 50 ways to identify their gender beyond male and female was conceived during a company hackathon four months ago.

This month, the first global hackathon for Black Male Achievement was held in Oakland, Calif. Music Hack Day is coming in Tokyo, and Hackomotive competitors will develop apps in Santa Monica, Calif., that make it easier to buy and sell cars.

During these sorts of tech-heavy, weekend competitions, teams of computer programmers, software engineers and developers huddle over monitors for hours, working up new apps for smartphones or other devices. A panel of judges selects winners, and prizes are usually awarded.

"Developers are a rare breed where they get paid a lot of money to do this job during the week, and they enjoy it so much they want to do it more on the weekend," said Jon Gotfried, who's been going to hackathons for more than three years.

As such events have become more popular, a set of rules has coalesced. Teams are typically made up of a handful of people. Designs, ideas and even mock-ups can be worked on in advance, but everyone starts writing code at the same time. Teams own



Fanya Young, right, and other participants work on their computers during a coding session at FinCapDev San Francisco Hackathon.

whatever they come up with.

The opening stages of a hackathon can be exciting as challenges, prizes, teams and judges are introduced. Within hours, there's a quiet buzz and lots of keyboard clicking as programmers make their ideas a reality.

Participants arrive with sleeping bags, deodorant, toothbrushes, pillows and laptops. By morning's wee hours, pizza, energy drinks and bean bag chairs are in hot demand. Candy of all kinds is consumed, and by the time the buzzer goes off after 24 or 48 hours, most participants are disheveled and a little loopy.

Like the tech industry itself, hackathon participants are mostly men. Some organizers are try-

ing to change that.

There was an unusually high number of women at a hackathon at the AT&T Developer Summit in Las Vegas last month after organizers promised \$10,000 extra to any team with a majority of females. It worked; both winning teams were led by women. In every other way, the event was typical.

"There are just four important things you need for a hackathon: food, Wi-Fi, power and people," said hackathon aficionado Mike Swift. "When you have those, people want to build together."

Swift went to his first hackathon in 2010. At an event a few months later, he and his friends created Hacker League, a pro-

gram that helps organizers coordinate their events online. "Since then, hackathons have totally exploded," he said. In December, Intel purchased Hacker League for an undisclosed amount.

Another well-known hackathon success story is GroupMe, a free online chat program inspired by a project conceived during a New York competition in 2010 and acquired by Skype in a reported \$85 million deal.

As those think sessions have grown from dorm room all-nighters to high-stakes events, problems have arisen.

In December, San Francisco-based Salesforce.com took heavy criticism from participants after it awarded a \$1 million hackathon prize — the largest such reward to date — to a former employee who had used pre-existing code during the competition.

After reviewing the rules and judging process, the firm decided that though the prize winners didn't violate rules, they were going to choose a second team to also win the \$1 million grand prize and declared the competition a tie.

"We heard feedback loud and clear," Salesforce vice president Adam Seligman wrote in a note to participants. "We didn't get this right. We should have been clearer."

Still, Seligman said the company intends hold more hackathons, using an outside firm to execute them. He said, "We want you to make awesome stuff and make money."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Authorities break up family brawl over puppy

FL BUNNELL — A Daytona Beach woman faces charges of aggravated battery after a family brawl over custody of a puppy.

Eight people were involved in the fight that happened in a Daytona Beach neighborhood after a woman and her husband came to pick up a puppy from the woman's mother.

According to an arrest report, the mother told her daughter to come back later because she wanted to spend more time with the puppy. The mother and daughter began to fight and other family members and bystanders got involved. Authorities said two people were injured when the woman used a knife to fend off people who were trying to take the puppy away.

Investigators said the dog belonged to a deceased relative.

College student uncovers hidden song

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — A sophomore college honors student in Oklahoma is believed to be the first person to transcribe and play a song found on a painting more than 500 years old.

Amelia Hamrick, 20, said she was goofing off on the Oklahoma Christian University campus recently with a friend when they decided to take another look at Hieronymus Bosch's painting "The Garden of Earthly Delights."

The three-panel painting was created about the year 1500 and depicts mankind's descent into Hell.

Hamrick found a new detail — a musical notation on the backside of one of the nude figures in the piece — and she began transcribing it to modern notation. She recorded it and posted the audio file to her personal blog, where it quickly gained popularity.

Hamrick called the painting a "500-year-old Where's Waldo poster."

Boy robs ice cream truck with gun

CA SAN DIEGO — Police in San Diego said a boy brandishing some sort of handgun robbed an ice cream truck driver.

Police described the boy as between 10 and 12 years old.

The driver, who was uninjured, handed over cash and the boy rode away on a skateboard Thursday night.

James Johnson said that it is possible the weapon was a pellet gun, but investigators are treating it as a real handgun.

Police: Mother tried to give baby away

NM ALBUQUERQUE — A 24-year-old woman is facing child abuse charges after being accused of trying to give her baby away outside an Albuquerque pharmacy.

Lorena Lopez appeared in court Saturday and will be held on

THE CENSUS

\$717K

The amount fetched at auction by Babe Ruth's pocket watch from the 1923 World Series. The pentagonal 14-karat gold watch was bought by a bidder who is remaining anonymous. The timepiece was part of a set given to Ruth and his Yankees teammates after they beat the rival New York Giants for the first of the Yankees' 27 world championships.



Dancing for a cause

Penn State's annual 46-hour no-sitting-or-sleeping dance marathon ended Sunday afternoon and raised a record \$13.34 million for pediatric cancer research and to provide support for patients and their families. A jam-packed arena of students, pediatric cancer patients, survivors and their families welcomed the announcement of the record for the annual THON fundraiser, which broke last year's record of \$12.37 million. Above: The captains hold up the total raised at the end of the event at the Bryce Jordan Center in State College, Pa. Right: Participants do a line dance. The event is billed as the largest student-run philanthropy in the world, and with Sunday's total students have raised more than \$114 million for the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital since 1977.

\$15,000 bail.

Police said a substance abuse counselor heard Lopez trying to give away the infant in front of a pharmacy on Central Avenue.

Police said the baby was covered in a sticky substance that was the result of a severe case of pink eye.

The infant was then hospitalized.

Love locks disappear from bridge to island

AK KODIAK — Kodiak residents are wondering what happened to their version of Paris love locks.

Lovers who visit bridges in Paris and other cities write their names on padlocks, attach them to bridge fences and throw the keys into the water to symbolize eternal love.

A few dozen couples did the same on the Fred Zharoff Memorial Bridge connecting the city to Near Island but the locks disappeared last week.

An Alaska Department of Transportation spokeswoman in December said the locks technically are considered vandalism, but removing them was low on the department priority list.

Cuban lost windsurfing to US found adrift

FL KEY WEST — The third and last Cuban migrant who disappeared while trying to windsurf across the Florida Straits has been found adrift.

Coast Guard officials found the man late Friday afternoon. He was barely able to speak. Coast Guardsman Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Davis said the man probably would not have made it one more day. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is investigating and will determine whether the men will be taken back to Cuba.

The three migrants left Jibacoa, Cuba, on Tuesday. One made it to Key West more than nine hours later and told authorities that he lost sight of the others about 60 miles south of Key West. A second was found by a boater Thursday.

Thief steals from Girl Scouts near shop

CA ESCONDIDO — Police are searching for a man who stole from a group of Girl Scouts in San Diego County who were collecting money toward

a program that sends cookies to U.S. troops.

Escondido police Lt. Mike Kearney said the suspect walked up to the Girl Scouts' table outside a grocery store Saturday and snatched a donation jar filled with about \$45.

Kearney said the money was supposed to go toward "Operation Thin Mint," a local Girl Scouts program that sends cookies and notes of support to deployed troops.

He said the suspect fled in a car. Witnesses jotted down the license plate number and police were trying to track down the vehicle.

2 appear in court in puppy shop arson case

NV LAS VEGAS — A Las Vegas pet shop owner pleaded not guilty to torching a store where firefighters rescued 27 puppies, and a judge set a bail hearing later this week for her accused co-defendant.

Shop owner Gloria Eun Hye Lee entered her plea Monday to 31 felony and misdemeanor charges.

In another courtroom, a judge scheduled a preliminary hearing March 10 for Kirk Bills on the same arson, conspiracy, burglary and attempted animal cruelty

charges.

Authorities say Lee and Bills are seen on security video setting the Jan. 27 fire at Lee's Prince and Princess pet store.

Bills was arrested Feb. 7 in Indiana.

Lee is being held on \$310,000 bail.

Woman who left baby on car roof pleads guilty

AZ PHOENIX — A woman who left her 5-week-old baby in a car seat on the roof of her car when she drove off has pleaded guilty to child abuse and misdemeanor DUI.

Maripecoa County Superior Court spokeswoman Karen Arra said Catalina Clouser is scheduled to be sentenced March 26 on the plea she entered Monday.

Phoenix police arrested Clouser last year after witnesses found a child strapped in a safety seat in the middle of an intersection.

The baby was in good condition.

According to police, Clouser forgot the baby was on the roof of her car when she left the home of friends where she had smoked marijuana.

From wire reports



PHOTOS BY ABBY DREY, (STATE COLLEGE, PA.) CENTRE DAILY TIMES/AP

FACES



AP

Actor and director Harold Ramis died Monday from complications of autoimmune inflammatory disease. He was 69.

'Ghostbusters' writer, actor Ramis dies

The Associated Press

Harold Ramis, the writer-director-actor who quietly and often off-screen created an unparalleled and hugely influential body of laughs, died Monday. He was 69.

He suffered for several years from an autoimmune disease that caused inflammation and damage to his blood vessels, and died at his home in the Chicago suburbs, surrounded by family and friends, his talent agency said.

His death rattled a modern comedy world Ramis helped build. His legacy as a father figure to generations of comedians was appropriately captured in Judd Apatow's "Knocked Up," in which Ramis was cast as Seth Rogen's father, Apatow said, "because we all saw him as the dream dad."

5 classic comedies he helped create

"Animal House": Fond of quoting from this all-time frat house favorite? Chances are you're quoting at least something written by Ramis, who worked on the screenplay with Douglas Kenney and Chris Miller.

"Caddyshack": Another classic that fans can recite from memory. Give Ramis a lot of the credit. He was the director and collaborated on the script with Kenney and Brian Doyle-Murray for this comic showcase for Rodney Dangerfield, Ted Knight, Chevy Chase and Ramis' pal Bill Murray as Carl Spackler, golf's most dangerous groundskeeper.

"Ghostbusters": He was Dr. Egon Spengler, the quiet Ghostbuster alongside Dan Aykroyd and Murray in one of the biggest hits of the '80s. He wrote the screenplay along with Aykroyd and an uncredited Rick Moranis.

"Stripes": Another high point for Murray watchers, with Ramis co-starring as a fellow military recruit and assisting on the script.

"Groundhog Day": This unforgettable comedy about a weatherman who lives through the same day over and over was a breakthrough for Murray as an actor and stands 20 years later as a pop culture fixture. Ramis, once again, helped make it happen. He directed and co-wrote the script with Danny Rubin.

Road to the Oscars starts with getting the green light

By JAKE COYLE

The Associated Press

This year's Academy Award nominees reflect a Hollywood truism: The margin between the dust bin and the Oscar red carpet is often razor thin.

The development process of any film can be lengthy and arduous, full of challenges in obtaining financing or a studio executive's stamp of approval. The biggest obstacle on the road to the Academy Awards is, for many films, simply getting a green light.

That's especially true nowadays, when studios have pulled back on their output and turned their focus almost exclusively to blockbusters. It makes for an annual Oscar irony: When Hollywood gathers to celebrate itself at the Academy Awards, it fetes not its standard business, but its oddities, its rarities, its freaks that somehow managed to squeeze through the cracks.

"The Wolf of Wall Street," for example, might seem like a no-brainer: Martin Scorsese, Leonardo DiCaprio, loads of sex and drugs. But even "The Wolf" nominated for five Oscars including best picture, came very close to never getting made. After developing the film, Warner Bros. dropped it in 2008. Scorsese would later lament having "wasted about five months of my life" waiting for the Warner Bros.' OK that never came.

It wasn't until years later (and after other directors were considered) that the project came together, with independent film company Red Granite Pictures financing the film's \$100 million budget, and Paramount Pictures distributing.

"It's actually kind of a miracle that this movie happened, especially the fact that we were allowed to keep the tone that we wanted all the way to the end," says DiCaprio. "When was the last time you saw a film like this happen? I don't know. It doesn't fit into any specific category or box. It's an epic. It's a giant Hollywood epic. It's almost like a film you'd have to make 30 or 40 years ago when directors had free rein."

The bet paid off not only in accolades, but at the box office. "The Wolf of Wall Street" has made more than \$335 million worldwide.

The case of "Dallas Buyers Club" (six nominations, including best picture) is even more remarkable. A film that's now counted among the nine best of the year by the Academy took nearly two decades to get made. Co-producer and co-screenwriter Craig Borten first sold the script in 1996 after meeting and interviewing Ron Woodroof, a Texan who combated AIDS with drugs smuggled from other countries.

At one time, Woody Harelson was attached to star with Dennis Hopper directing. Later, after the script was sold to Universal Pictures, Brad Pitt was lined up to play Woodroof, with Marc Forster directing. Another iteration brought in Ryan Gosling and director Craig Gillespie.

It was only revived with Matthew McConaughey (the best actor front-runner) and director Jean-Marc Vallée. After the rights to the screenplay went dormant and Borten and co-

producer Melissa Wallack were able to buy them back. And still, just weeks before filming began, investors pulled their money.

The breach was filled partly because McConaughey gave it an air of inevitability. He had already begun losing weight for the role and discussed it on TV talk shows.

Made for just \$5 million and shot in 25 days, "Dallas Buyers Club" finally got made, long after AIDS dwindled from the headlines. Specialty division Focus Features acquired the film, which has made \$30.5 million worldwide.

Several of the Oscar nominees have relied on a single person to change their fate. When "12 Years a Slave" director Steve McQueen accepted the Golden Globe award for best drama, he thanked producer Brad Pitt: "Without you, this film would have never got made."

Similar kudos have gone to the young producer Megan Ellison, whose Annupurna Pictures bankrolled two best-picture nominees: David O. Russell's "American Hustle" (jointly with Sony Pictures) and Spike Jonze's "Her" (released by Warner Bros.).

The 28-year-old Ellison, daughter of billionaire Larry Ellison, has been roundly hailed for backing the kind of edgy, auteur-oriented films that are struggling to find financing. (In recent years, she's produced "Zero Dark Thirty," "The Master" and "True Grit.")

But such deep-pocketed, director-friendly financiers are few, and the route is exceptionally narrow for the kind of prestigious pictures honored at the Oscars.

With "Nebraska" (nominated for six Oscars, including best picture), filmmaker Alexander Payne managed a seemingly impossible feat: getting a studio (Paramount) to produce a black-and-white film. But it took lengthy negotiations, and had to survive a series of film division closings. "Nebraska" was first with Paramount Classics, then Paramount Vantage, and finally ended up with Paramount Pictures.

The domino-effect journey of "Nebraska" reflects a larger shift in the industry. Particularly over the past decade, studios have moved away from smaller and medium-sized dramas, instead concentrating resources on blockbuster and genre releases that can earn hundreds of millions globally.

Payne's mantra is advocating for the \$20-\$25 million adult comedy or drama. Instead of always swinging for the fences, he believes in the more reliable double.

In the current climate, the handful of ambitious, adult-oriented films that do get produced are almost exclusively appraised through the prism of Hollywood's awards season. The strange effect is that these few films that have clawed their way onto screens are then set against each other for months of Oscar wrestling.

"The eight, 10, 12 good English-language films are all released in the last quarter of the year and expected to grid for battle for Oscars and Golden Globes and all that stuff," says Payne. "And they're just movies. They may be fragile movies, human movies. They just need to find an audience on their own without having comparative judgment made along with it."



AP

Paula Patton and Robin Thicke have decided to end their nine-year-old marriage.

Thicke, Patton splitting

The Associated Press

Robin Thicke and Paula Patton are calling it quits.

A representative for the actress confirmed Monday that she and the singer are ending their nine-year marriage.

"We will always love each other and be best friends, however, we have mutually decided to separate at this time," the entertainers said in a joint statement.

Thicke, 36, and Patton, 38, met when they were teenagers. They had a son, Julian Fuego Thicke, in 2010.

Robin Thicke had a breakthrough last year with the international hit "Blurred Lines," which was nominated for several Grammy Awards. Patton has appeared in the films "Mission: Impossible — Ghost Protocol," "Idlewild," and "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire."

Other news

■ Jimmy Fallon may be the late night host with a new show, but Jimmy Kimmel has reason to celebrate, too. Kimmel and his wife Molly McNearney are expecting their first child together, his representative Lewis Kay confirmed Monday. Kimmel, 46, has two children, a 20-year-old son and 22-year-old daughter, from a previous marriage. It will be the first baby for McNearney, 35.

■ Actress Amanda Bynes, 27, pleaded no contest Monday to alcohol-related reckless driving after she clipped a Los Angeles County sheriff's patrol car. Bynes was sentenced to three years and three months of attending alcohol education classes.

■ Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Neil Young is releasing a second memoir: Blue Rider Press told The Associated Press that the book, currently untitled, is scheduled for the fall. Young's first memoir, "Waging Heavy Peace," was a best-seller published by Blue Rider in 2012.



Find out what Stripes staff think about the best picture nominees
stripes.com/Oscars2014

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Bitcoin site offline amid theft reports

By YURIKO NAGANO
AND STEPHEN WRIGHT
The Associated Press

TOKYO — The website of major bitcoin exchange Mt. Gox is offline Tuesday amid reports it suffered a debilitating theft, a new setback for efforts to gain legitimacy for the virtual currency.

The URL of Tokyo-based Mt. Gox was returning a blank page. The disappearance of the site follows the resignation Sunday of Mt. Gox CEO Mark Karpeles from the board of the Bitcoin Foundation.

At the Tokyo office trader housing Mt. Gox, bitcoin trader Kolin Burges said he had picketed the building since Feb. 14 after flying in from London, hoping to get back \$320,000 he has tied up in bitcoins with Mt. Gox.

"I may have lost all of my money," said Burges, next to placards asking if Mt. Gox is bankrupt. "It hasn't shaken my trust in Bitcoin, but it has shaken my trust in bitcoin exchanges."

A "crisis strategy" report shared widely online that purports to be an internal Mt. Gox document says more than 740,000 bitcoins are missing from the exchange, which froze withdrawals earlier this month. It says the theft went unnoticed for several years and turned on disguised withdrawals.

A theft of that magnitude would equate to losses of \$350 million at current bitcoin prices, but in practice such a figure is highly uncertain because of Bitcoin's extreme fluctuations in value and its lack of broad acceptance as an alternative to money.



Kaom: Hiron/AP

Bitcoin trader Kolin Burges, right, of London, and Aaron, an American who gave only his first name, conduct a sit-in in front of the office tower housing Mt. Gox in Tokyo on Tuesday.

The cloud hanging over Mt. Gox is a possibly fatal blow to Bitcoin, which was started in 2009 as a currency free from government controls. Supporters have said Bitcoin's cryptography makes it immune to theft or counterfeiting.

Several bitcoin exchanges and related organizations released a joint statement that said they are working to "re-establish the trust squandered" by the failings of Mt. Gox.

EXCHANGE RATES

| Military rates | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Euro costs (Feb. 26) | \$1.4114 |
| Dollar buys (Feb. 26) | €0.7085 |
| British pound (Feb. 26) | £1.0082 |
| Japanese yen (Feb. 26) | ¥100.00 |
| South Korean won (Feb. 26) | ₩1,043.00 |
| Commercial rates | |
| Bahrain (Dinar) | 0.3771 |
| British pound | £1.0671 |
| Canada (Dollar) | 1.0082 |
| China (Yuan) | 6.1247 |
| Denmark (Krone) | 6.4238 |
| Egypt (Pound) | 6.9635 |
| Euro | \$1.3762/0.7266 |
| Hong Kong (Dollar) | 7.7615 |
| Hungary (Forint) | 224.72 |
| Israel (Shekel) | 3.5162 |
| Japan (Yen) | 102.12 |
| Kuwait (Dinar) | 0.2822 |
| Norway (Krone) | 6.0221 |
| Philippines (Peso) | 44.61 |
| Poland (Zloty) | 3.02 |
| Saudi Arabia (Riyal) | 3.7595 |
| Singapore (Dollar) | 1.2640 |
| South Korea (Won) | 1,072.71 |
| Switzerland (Franc) | 0.8861 |
| Thailand (Baht) | 32.55 |
| Turkey (Lira) | 2.2038 |

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonmilitary currency exchange rates (i.e., commercial rates), see the exchange rates with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollar-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Prime rate | 3.25 |
| Discount rate | 7.75 |
| Federal funds market rate | 0.07 |
| 3-month bill | 0.64 |
| 30-year bond | 3.70 |

MARKET WATCH

Feb. 24, 2014

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Dow Jones | +103.84 |
| industrials | 16,207.14 |
| Nasdaq | +29.56 |
| composite | 4,292.97 |
| Standard & Poor's 500 | +11.36 |
| | 1,847.61 |
| Russell | +9.92 |
| 2000 | 1,174.55 |

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Wednesday's US temperatures

| City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | City | Hi | Lo | Wthr |
|-------------------|----|-----|-------|------------------|----|-----|-------|
| Ablene, Texas | 36 | 30 | Cldy | Chattanooga | 42 | 20 | Pcldy |
| Akron, Ohio | 16 | 6 | Cldy | Chicago | 13 | 3 | Pcldy |
| Albany, N.Y. | 21 | 7 | Cldy | Cincinnati | 22 | 13 | Pcldy |
| Albuquerque | 63 | 39 | Pcldy | Cleveland | 16 | 6 | Cldy |
| Allentown, Pa. | 27 | 7 | Cldy | Colorado Springs | 48 | 29 | Pcldy |
| Amarillo | 45 | 27 | Pcldy | Columbia, S.C. | 52 | 29 | Rain |
| Anchorage | 37 | 35 | Cldy | Columbus, Ga. | 48 | 28 | Rain |
| Asheville | 38 | 16 | Pcldy | Columbus, Ohio | 19 | 11 | Cldy |
| Atlanta | 43 | 24 | Cldy | Concord, N.H. | 24 | 1 | Cldy |
| Atlantic City | 31 | 9 | Snow | Corpus Christi | 57 | 43 | Rain |
| Austin | 21 | -11 | Snow | Dallas-Ft. Worth | 41 | 30 | Cldy |
| Baltimore | 33 | 19 | Snow | Dayton | 17 | 10 | Pcldy |
| Baton Rouge | 49 | 33 | Rain | Daytona Beach | 70 | 54 | Rain |
| Bilings | 32 | 13 | Cldy | Denver | 44 | 28 | Cldy |
| Birmingham | 39 | 23 | Pcldy | Des Moines | 23 | -1 | Snow |
| Bismarck | 21 | -11 | Snow | Detroit | 15 | 7 | Snow |
| Boise | 61 | 38 | Cldy | Duluth | 11 | -19 | Cldy |
| Boston | 29 | 13 | Snow | El Paso | 70 | 51 | Cldy |
| Bridgport | 39 | 23 | Snow | Elkins | 22 | 10 | Snow |
| Brownsville | 66 | 49 | Rain | Erie | 15 | 5 | Snow |
| Buffalo | 14 | 6 | Cldy | Eugene | 54 | 43 | Cldy |
| Burlington, Vt. | 21 | 4 | Snow | Evansville | 24 | 17 | Cldy |
| Caribou, Maine | 18 | -2 | Cldy | Fairbanks | 19 | -2 | Cldy |
| Charleston, S.C. | 57 | 35 | Rain | Fargo | 16 | -17 | Snow |
| Charleston, W.Va. | 28 | 14 | Snow | Flagstaff | 56 | 27 | Cldy |
| Charlotte, N.C. | 48 | 24 | Cldy | Flint | 12 | 4 | Snow |
| | | | | Fort Smith | 42 | 22 | Cldy |

| City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | City | Hi | Lo | Wthr |
|------------------|----|----|-------|----------------|----|----|-------|
| Fort Wayne | 11 | 3 | Cldy | Louisville | 25 | 19 | Cldy |
| Fresno | 70 | 50 | Cldy | Lubbock | 43 | 29 | Cldy |
| Goodland | 43 | 19 | Cldy | Macon | 49 | 26 | Rain |
| Grand Junction | 57 | 33 | Pcldy | Madison | 31 | 10 | Cldy |
| Grand Rapids | 12 | 5 | Snow | Medford | 57 | 41 | Rain |
| Great Falls | 35 | 22 | Pcldy | Memphis | 36 | 24 | Pcldy |
| Greensboro, N.C. | 42 | 24 | Pcldy | Miami Beach | 84 | 70 | Cldy |
| Harrisburg | 28 | 10 | Cldy | Midland-Odessa | 43 | 32 | Cldy |
| Hartford | 25 | 8 | Cldy | Milwaukee | 11 | 2 | Pcldy |
| Helena | 31 | 16 | Pcldy | Mpls-St. Paul | 17 | -9 | Snow |
| Honolulu | 80 | 64 | Pcldy | Missoula | 25 | 16 | Cldy |
| Houston | 49 | 36 | Rain | Mobile | 40 | 29 | Rain |
| Huntsville | 34 | 15 | Pcldy | Montgomery | 45 | 27 | Rain |
| Indianapolis | 17 | 8 | Cldy | Nashville | 30 | 18 | Cldy |
| Jacksonville | 46 | 24 | Cldy | Paducah | 27 | 20 | Cldy |
| Jacksonville | 62 | 46 | Rain | New York City | 30 | 15 | Snow |
| Janeau | 38 | 26 | Pcldy | Norfolk | 40 | 23 | Snow |
| Kansas City | 30 | 16 | Cldy | North Platte | 36 | 10 | Cldy |
| Knoxville | 37 | 19 | Pcldy | Oklahoma City | 40 | 24 | Cldy |
| La Crosse | 49 | 34 | Cldy | Omaha | 33 | 5 | Cldy |
| Lansing | 12 | 3 | Cldy | Orlando | 77 | 59 | Rain |
| Las Vegas | 76 | 54 | Cldy | Paducah | 27 | 20 | Cldy |
| Lexington | 23 | 16 | Cldy | Pendleton | 42 | 32 | Cldy |
| Lincoln | 35 | 8 | Cldy | Peoria | 18 | 3 | Cldy |
| Little Rock | 41 | 26 | Pcldy | Philadelphia | 30 | 15 | Snow |
| Los Angeles | 65 | 52 | Cldy | Phoenix | 81 | 55 | Snow |
| | | | | Pittsburgh | 18 | 8 | Cldy |

| City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | City | Hi | Lo | Wthr |
|-----------------|----|----|-------|-------------------|----|----|-------|
| Pocatello | 51 | 34 | Pcldy | Shreveport | 45 | 28 | Cldy |
| Portland, Maine | 57 | 41 | Cldy | Sioux City | 29 | 0 | Snow |
| Portland, Ore. | 51 | 41 | Cldy | Sioux Falls | 25 | -8 | Snow |
| Providence | 30 | 12 | Snow | South Bend | 10 | 2 | Snow |
| Pueblo | 47 | 27 | Pcldy | Spokane | 33 | 28 | Cldy |
| Raleigh-Durham | 44 | 25 | Cldy | Springfield, Ill. | 21 | 7 | Cldy |
| Rapid City | 71 | 59 | Cldy | Springfield, Mo. | 31 | 19 | Cldy |
| Reno | 61 | 36 | Cldy | Syracuse | 18 | 5 | Cldy |
| Richmond | 43 | 20 | Cldy | Tallahassee | 35 | 20 | Rain |
| Rio Rancho | 37 | 18 | Pcldy | Tampa | 73 | 57 | Cldy |
| Rochester | 16 | 6 | Cldy | Toledo | 13 | 4 | Cldy |
| Rockford | 64 | 12 | -2 | Troy | 33 | 17 | Cldy |
| Sacramento | 64 | 52 | Rain | Tucson | 77 | 51 | Pcldy |
| St. Louis | 27 | 13 | Cldy | Tulsa | 38 | 24 | Cldy |
| St. Petersburg | 71 | 59 | Cldy | Tulsa | 39 | 20 | Pcldy |
| St. Thomas | 84 | 73 | Cldy | Waco | 41 | 30 | Cldy |
| Salem, Ore. | 56 | 43 | Cldy | Washington | 35 | 20 | Cldy |
| Salt Lake City | 60 | 41 | Pcldy | W Palm Beach | 83 | 69 | Cldy |
| San Angelo | 37 | 28 | Cldy | Wichita | 38 | 20 | Cldy |
| San Antonio | 47 | 38 | Rain | Wichita Falls | 43 | 26 | Pcldy |
| San Diego | 66 | 55 | Cldy | Wilkes-Barre | 22 | 6 | Cldy |
| San Francisco | 53 | 37 | Rain | Wilmington, Del. | 31 | 12 | Snow |
| San Jose | 60 | 52 | Rain | Yakima | 45 | 29 | Cldy |
| San Juan, P.R. | 87 | 72 | Cldy | Youngstown | 14 | 5 | Cldy |
| Santa Fe | 59 | 30 | Cldy | | | | |
| St. Marie | 8 | -6 | Snow | | | | |
| Savannah | 56 | 38 | Rain | | | | |
| Seattle | 54 | 41 | Cldy | | | | |

National temperature extremes
Hi: Mon., 88, West Kendall, Fla.
Lo: Mon., -15, Willow City, N.D.

Stripes

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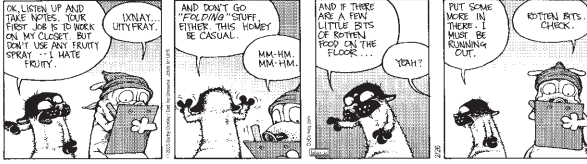
Non Sequitur



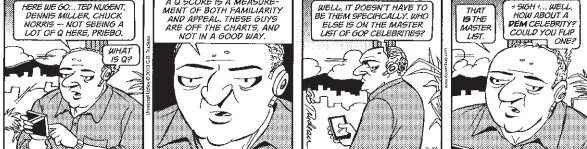
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | 5 | 6 | 7 | | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | |
| 12 | | | | | 13 | | | | 14 | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | 16 | | | | 17 | | | | |
| 18 | | | | | | | 19 | 20 | | | | | |
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| 23 | 24 | 25 | | 26 | | 27 | | 28 | | | 29 | 30 | |
| 31 | | | | 32 | | 33 | | 34 | | 35 | | | |
| 36 | | | | | 37 | | 38 | | 39 | | 40 | | |
| | | | 41 | | | 42 | | 43 | | 44 | | | |
| 45 | 46 | | | | | | 47 | | | | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| 51 | | | | | | 52 | 53 | | | | | | |
| 54 | | | | | | 55 | | | | 56 | | | |
| 57 | | | | | | 58 | | | | 59 | | | |

ACROSS

- 1 Body powder
- 5 Party bowlful
- 8 Diving duck
- 12 Lotion additive
- 13 — pickle
- 14 Graceful young woman
- 15 Vendor
- 17 Caspian Sea feeder
- 18 Soon-to-be grad
- 19 Red shade
- 21 Floral garland
- 22 Trumpet
- 23 Upper limb
- 26 Society newcomer
- 28 Hot wine drink
- 31 Consider
- 33 Error indicator
- 35 Blue Devils' school

DOWN

- 1 Scottish headgear
- 2 Sheltered
- 3 Forsaken
- 4 Beany's pal
- 5 Blogs, basically
- 6 B&B
- 7 Fix a tear
- 8 Incited
- 9 Egg-white concoction
- 10 Historic times
- 11 — E. Coyote
- 16 Tackled the weeds
- 20 A billion years
- 23 Billboards
- 24 Fun and games
- 25 Vieira or Baxter
- 27 Chest protector?
- 29 Guitar's kin
- 30 Yen fraction
- 32 Fauvism co-founder
- 34 Life, to Sally Bowles
- 37 Chap
- 39 Tom-tom, for one
- 42 Slot machine symbol
- 44 Radio station sign
- 45 Davenport's place
- 46 Ear-related
- 48 VCR supplantor
- 49 Midmonth date
- 50 Being (Lat.)
- 53 Ram's ma'am

Answer to Previous Puzzle

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D | R | I | P | | S | K | I | | A | F | A | R |
| D | O | O | R | | H | A | N | | U | R | G | E |
| A | U | T | O | B | A | H | N | | T | E | E | S |
| Y | E | A | | U | R | N | | D | O | E | S | T |
| | | | | A | M | P | | P | D | F | | |
| S | Y | R | U | P | | A | U | T | O | M | A | T |
| P | O | U | T | | U | M | P | | C | U | T | E |
| A | U | T | O | P | S | Y | | J | U | D | E | A |
| | | | | M | O | E | | G | U | S | | |
| R | E | L | A | X | | B | A | D | | D | A | M |
| E | X | I | T | | A | U | T | O | N | O | M | Y |
| N | A | N | O | | P | R | E | | O | D | O | R |
| O | M | E | N | | E | N | D | | R | O | S | A |

2-26

CRYPTOQUIP

XBGX CFR KM UVGTTT ZKTQ
GYWFX SUFKX HKVM ZKXB JUFMX
WA XWH. BV'M QVSKAKXVTR
G J W Y Y T V U C W Y Y T V U .

Yesterday's Cryptquip: THOSE MALE SHEEP SUDDENLY DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING. THEY'RE PROBABLY SUFFERING FROM RAM-nesia.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: B equals H

AUTO RACING

Daytona win lifts 'heavy weight' from Earnhardt

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. **T**here was a moment late in the Daytona 500 when Dale Earnhardt Jr. had a moment to catch his breath. It was clearly his race to lose and the tension ran thick through Junior Nation, all the way into his car.

Steve Letarte, the crew chief and cheerleader who had rebuilt Earnhardt's crumpled confidence

In the Pits



by JENNA
FRYER • AP

said, before he paused. "I'm enjoying particular pieces of it, but the entire experience is driving me crazy."

That's the albatross that was strapped to the back of NASCAR's most popular driver as he closed in on his second Daytona 500 victory. It had been 10 years since he won his first 500, and after three runner-up finishes the last four seasons in a race that had caused his family so much heartache and joy, the moment was overwhelming.

There's so much pressure on Earnhardt, who entered the season-opening showcase mired in a 55-race losing streak dating to 2012. He'd won just two races since joining mighty Hendrick Motorsports in 2008, and as he closes in on his 40th birthday, he is still searching for his first Cup championship.



Dale Earnhardt Jr., center, celebrates in Victory Lane with teammate Jimmie Johnson, left, and team owner Rick Hendrick, right, after winning Sunday's Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla.

It's been openly stated by the suits at NASCAR that when Junior wins, NASCAR's popularity surges. So under that theory, if he could just get it together, the days of flat television numbers and sagging attendance would certainly spike.

That's a lot of pressure to put on one guy, and it hit him as he readied himself for the homestretch Sunday night.

"It's a big race and you want to win it so badly, and your team wants to win so badly," he said afterward. "You realize at that moment that there are countless people watching on television and there are countless people sitting in the grandstands with your shirts and hats on, and your team

is over on the pit wall and your family back home — there are so many people pulling for you and want to see you win. It's a heavy weight."

This time, he delivered.

He emerged from a rain delay of more than six hours with the strongest car in the field. As other drivers struggled to keep busy during the lengthy break, Earnhardt said his concern was not consuming too much of the junk food stored in his motorhome.

He knew what he had in the No. 88 Chevrolet.

"I knew it was something special," he said. "I knew we had enough race car. I was a little bit nervous because the pressure was on me because there was

plenty of car to do it."

Earnhardt handled every challenge over the final 50 miles. He shook off Greg Biffle, the peskiest foe, and then Carl Edwards. Lined up for a two-lap sprint to the finish, he found himself next to one-time protégé Brad Keselowski, who had a car almost as strong as Earnhardt's.

But Earnhardt had teammate Jeff Gordon on his bumper to help on the final restart, and once he cleared Keselowski it was essentially over. Moves made by other drivers in the pack ruined Keselowski's pursuit and Denny Hamlin stormed through the field but didn't have the help he needed or enough laps to mount a proper charge.

Hamlin, who won two races earlier in Speedweeks and was going for the trifecta, was dejected with second place. But he noted the significance of the victory.

The late Dale Earnhardt won 34 races at Daytona International Speedway, but his only 500 victory came in 1998 in his 20th try. He was killed in an accident on the last lap of the 2001 race, triggered while he tried to protect a 1-2 finish for Michael Waltrip and his son, who both drove for him.

Conspiracy has followed Earnhardt Jr. since his father's death as fans wondered if some of his biggest career moments were freebies from NASCAR during a time of mourning. Third-place finisher Keselowski believes Daytona 500 win No. 2 cannot be challenged.

"I think this particular race, there's no drama. There's no feeling I think anybody could legitimately have that there's voodoo magic that he won," Keselowski said.

NASCAR's favorite son won the biggest race and earned the first spot in the playoffs under a new championship format that rewards winning. Hendrick Motorsports got at least one week of respite from fans wondering why Earnhardt never wins.

And Earnhardt, at least for this week, got to remove that albatross. And after finally joining Twitter, he rewarded his fans — more than 400,000 despite only four tweets — by posting a Monday morning selfie, standing in front of the statue of his father at Daytona:

"Look who I ran into at the Daytona Experience. Dad's Happy!"

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College baseball

Baseball America Top 25
DURHAM, N.C. — The top 25 teams in the college baseball poll with records through Feb. 23 and previous ranking (voting by the staff of Baseball America):

| Record | Pts |
|-------------------------|------|
| 1. Virginia | 6-1 |
| 2. Florida State | 6-0 |
| 3. South Carolina | 7-0 |
| 4. Oregon State | 5-2 |
| 5. Cal State Fullerton | 4-3 |
| 6. N.C. State | 5-2 |
| 7. LSU | 7-0 |
| 8. Vanderbilt | 6-1 |
| 9. Florida | 7-0 |
| 10. Louisiana-Lafayette | 7-1 |
| 11. Clemson | 6-1 |
| 12. Rice | 6-1 |
| 13. Cal Poly | 6-1 |
| 14. Miami | 6-1 |
| 15. North Carolina | 6-1 |
| 16. TCU | 6-1 |
| 17. Indiana | 2-5 |
| 18. Mississippi State | 4-3 |
| 19. Louisville | 4-3 |
| 20. Alabama | 4-2 |
| 21. North Carolina | 4-2 |
| 22. Texas A&M | 6-1 |
| 24. Arkansas | 6-0 |
| 25. Florida | 3-23 |

Collegiate Baseball poll
TUCSON, Ariz. — The Collegiate Baseball poll with records through Feb. 23. Voting is done by coaches, sports writers and sports information people.

| Record | Pts |
|-------------------------|-----|
| 1. LSU | 6-0 |
| 2. Florida State | 6-0 |
| 3. Oregon | 7-0 |
| 4. Vanderbilt | 6-1 |
| 5. South Carolina | 7-0 |
| 6. Virginia | 6-1 |
| 7. N.C. State | 6-1 |
| 8. Oregon State | 5-2 |
| 9. Louisville | 5-2 |
| 10. Cal State Fullerton | 4-3 |
| 11. Oklahoma State | 4-2 |
| 12. TCU | 6-1 |
| 13. Louisiana-Lafayette | 7-1 |
| 14. Cal Poly | 6-1 |
| 15. Rice | 6-1 |
| 16. Miami | 6-1 |
| 17. Miami | 6-1 |
| 18. Clemson | 6-1 |
| 19. North Carolina | 6-1 |
| 20. Arizona | 6-1 |
| 21. Texas A&M | 6-1 |
| 22. Texas | 6-1 |
| 23. East Tennessee | 6-1 |
| 24. Tennessee | 6-1 |
| 25. Southern Cal | 6-1 |
| 30. FIU | 6-0 |

Monday's games
SOUTH
Freed-Hammond 6, Goshen 5, 11 innings
Georgia Gwinnett-109, Loyola 10-1
SOUTHWEST
LeTourneau 9, Castleton 5
Texas Tech 4, BYU 2
Wayland Baptist 9, Okla. Panhandle 5

College hockey

NCAA Division I poll
MINNEAPOLIS — The top 20 teams in the NCAA Division I men's ice hockey poll released by U.S. College Hockey Online, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Feb. 23 and previous ranking:

| Record | Pts |
|------------------------|---------|
| 1. Boston College (49) | 25-4-4 |
| 2. Minnesota (31) | 25-1-4 |
| 3. Wisconsin | 23-7-3 |
| 4. Ferris State | 23-7-3 |
| 5. Ohio State | 22-6-4 |
| 6. Wisconsin | 22-6-4 |
| 7. UMass-Lowell | 20-6-4 |
| 8. Quinnipiac | 18-10-4 |
| 9. Northeastern | 18-10-4 |
| 10. North Dakota | 18-10-4 |
| 11. Cornell | 17-10-4 |
| 12. Michigan | 17-10-4 |
| 13. Michigan | 15-10-4 |
| 14. Notre Dame | 15-10-4 |
| 15. Colgate | 15-10-4 |
| 16. Princeton | 15-10-4 |
| 17. Maine | 15-11-4 |
| 18. Minnesota State | 13-10-4 |
| 19. Denver | 13-10-4 |
| 20. Denver | 13-10-4 |

Others receiving votes: Ohio State 25, New Hampshire 14, Minnesota Duluth 15, Clarkson 13, Western Michigan 12, Air Force 7, Mercyhurst 6.

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25
The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Feb. 23, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote. Last week's ranking:

| Record | Pts |
|-----------------------|------|
| 1. Florida (47) | 25-1 |
| 2. Wichita State (14) | 25-1 |
| 3. Arizona | 24-1 |
| 4. Syracuse | 25-1 |
| 5. Kansas | 24-1 |
| 6. Duke | 22-6 |
| 7. Louisville | 23-1 |
| 8. Villanova | 23-1 |
| 9. Creighton | 23-1 |
| 10. Saint Joseph's | 23-1 |
| 11. Cincinnati | 24-1 |
| 12. Virginia | 23-1 |
| 13. San Diego St. | 23-1 |
| 14. Wisconsin | 22-6 |
| 15. Kentucky | 22-6 |
| 16. Michigan | 22-6 |
| 17. Kentucky | 22-6 |
| 18. Michigan St. | 22-6 |
| 19. North Carolina | 22-6 |
| 20. Louisville | 22-6 |
| 21. Memphis | 21-6 |
| 22. Ohio St. | 22-6 |
| 23. SMU | 22-6 |
| 24. Texas | 22-6 |
| 25. New Mexico | 21-6 |

Others receiving votes: UConn 81, UCLA 81, Oklahoma State 81, Auburn 81, UMass 9, Gonzaga 2, Green Bay 2, NC Central 1.

USA Today Men's Top 25

The top 25 teams in the USA Today men's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Feb. 23, points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking:

| Record | Pts |
|----------------------|------|
| 1. Florida (24) | 25-1 |
| 2. Wichita State (8) | 25-1 |
| 3. Arizona | 25-1 |
| 4. Kentucky | 25-1 |
| 5. Syracuse | 25-1 |
| 6. Kansas | 25-1 |
| 7. Duke | 22-6 |
| 8. Villanova | 23-1 |
| 9. Creighton | 23-1 |
| 10. Saint Joseph's | 23-1 |
| 11. Cincinnati | 24-1 |
| 12. Virginia | 23-1 |
| 13. San Diego St. | 23-1 |
| 14. Wisconsin | 22-6 |
| 15. Kentucky | 22-6 |
| 16. Michigan | 22-6 |
| 17. Iowa State | 21-6 |
| 18. North Carolina | 22-6 |
| 19. Louisville | 22-6 |
| 20. Ohio State | 22-6 |
| 21. Memphis | 21-6 |
| 22. Ohio St. | 22-6 |
| 23. SMU | 22-6 |
| 24. Texas | 22-6 |
| 25. Oklahoma | 21-6 |

Others receiving votes: UConn 47, New Mexico 45, UCLA 15, Kansas State 15, UMass 5, Stephen F. Austin 5, Pittsburgh 4, Gonzaga 3, Baylor 1, Middle Tennessee 1, Nebraska 1, Green Bay 1.

Monday's men's scores

EAST
Mount St. Mary's 88, Bryant 73
Wagner 67, Fairfield Dickinson 64
MIDWEST
Alcorn St. 64, Alabama A&M 56
Delaware St. 59, Morgan St. 56
Indiana 89, Howard 67
Hampton 104, Mid-Eastern Shore 89
Linwood (Ill.) 79, Campbellsville 76
SOUTHWEST
MSU 75, Prairie View 69
Ark-La-Tex 68, Howard 67
Southern U. 67, Alabama St. 64
Texas Tech 67, Maryland 67
The Citadel 81, Samford 71
SOUTHWEST
E. Illinois 84, Chicago 62
Kansas 83, Oklahoma 75
Oklahoma St. 76, TCU 54
Texas Southern 65, Pine Bluff 55
FAR WEST
Portland St. 87, Washington 76

AP Men's Top 25 schedule

Wednesday's games
No. 3 Arizona vs. California
No. 8 Villanova vs. Baylor
No. 13 Indiana vs. Miami
No. 14 Kentucky vs. West Virginia
No. 16 Michigan at Purdue
No. 19 North Carolina at N.C. State
No. 20 Louisville vs. Baylor
Thursday's games
No. 7 Louisville vs. Tompkins
No. 10 Saint Louis vs. Duquesne
No. 11 Kentucky vs. Arkansas
No. 20 Iowa at Indiana
No. 21 Memphis at Houston
No. 22 Ohio State at Penn St.
Friday's games
No. 1 Florida vs. Oklahoma
No. 2 Wichita State vs. Missouri State
No. 4 Syracuse at No. 12 Virginia
No. 5 Kansas at Oklahoma State
No. 7 Louisville at No. 21 Memphis
No. 8 Villanova at Xavier
No. 10 Saint Louis at VCU
No. 11 Cincinnati vs. UConn at the XL Center in Storrs, Conn.
No. 13 San Diego State at Fresno State

No. 15 Iowa State at Kansas State
No. 16 Michigan vs. Minnesota
No. 17 Kentucky at South Carolina
No. 18 Michigan State vs. Illinois
No. 19 Iowa State at Purdue
No. 23 SMU vs. UCF
No. 24 Texas at Oklahoma
Sunday's game
No. 3 Arizona vs. Stanford
No. 4 Villanova vs. Marquette
No. 14 Wisconsin at Penn State
No. 22 Ohio State at Indiana
No. 23 New Mexico at Nevada

AP Women's Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Feb. 23, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and last week's ranking:

| Record | Pts |
|----------------------|-------|
| 1. UConn (36) | 25-0 |
| 2. Notre Dame | 27-0 |
| 3. Louisville | 27-0 |
| 4. South Carolina | 25-2 |
| 5. Stanford | 25-2 |
| 6. Baylor | 24-3 |
| 7. Duke | 24-4 |
| 8. Penn St. | 25-5 |
| 9. Maryland | 22-5 |
| 10. Tennessee | 22-5 |
| 11. West Virginia | 24-5 |
| 12. Kentucky | 20-7 |
| 13. North Carolina | 20-7 |
| 14. North Carolina | 21-4 |
| 15. South Carolina | 20-5 |
| 16. Nebraska | 21-5 |
| 17. Texas A&M | 21-5 |
| 18. Oregon | 20-7 |
| 19. Purdue | 20-7 |
| 20. Michigan St. | 20-7 |
| 21. Michigan St. | 18-16 |
| 22. Indiana | 20-7 |
| 23. Middle Tennessee | 23-4 |
| 24. Rutgers | 20-6 |

Others receiving votes: LSU 35 Dayton 23, Bowling Green 23, DePaul 13, James Madison 12, St. John's 10, Oregon St. 8, BYU 6, Vanderbilt 5, Syracuse 5, UTEP 2, Georgia Tech 2.

USA Today Women's Top 25

The top 25 teams in the USA Today women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Feb. 23, points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking:

| Record | Pts |
|--------------------|-------|
| 1. UConn (31) | 25-0 |
| 2. Notre Dame | 25-0 |
| 3. Louisville | 27-0 |
| 4. Stanford | 24-6 |
| 5. Baylor | 22-3 |
| 6. South Carolina | 22-3 |
| 7. Duke | 22-3 |
| 8. North Carolina | 20-5 |
| 9. Maryland | 20-5 |
| 10. Tennessee | 20-5 |
| 11. Penn State | 20-5 |
| 12. Oklahoma State | 20-5 |
| 13. Texas Tech | 20-5 |
| 14. West Virginia | 22-3 |
| 15. Kentucky | 22-3 |
| 16. N.C. State | 22-3 |
| 17. Nebraska | 19-5 |
| 18. Oregon | 20-5 |
| 19. California | 18-16 |
| 20. Gonzaga | 23-4 |
| 21. Purdue | 18-15 |
| 22. Dayton | 18-15 |
| 23. Arizona State | 20-6 |
| 24. Arizona State | 20-6 |

Others receiving votes: St. John's 38, DePaul 36, Middle Tennessee 36, State 19, Texas 13, BYU 12, Georgia 12, Rutgers 11, James Madison 10, Michigan 10, Saint Joseph's 9, Oregon 8, Central Michigan 2, Villanova 1.

Monday's women's scores

EAST
Army 78, Lehigh 69
UConn 79, Sacred Heart 66
LIU Brooklyn 56, Fairfield Dickinson 54
Mount St. Mary's 97, St. Francis (Pa.) 80
St. Francis (NY) 93, Robert Morris 82, OT
Wagner 75, CCSU 63
SOUTH
Alabama A&M 70, Alcorn St. 49
Ark-La-Tex 68, Southern U. 63
Appalachian St. 72, Davidson 70, OT
Ark-La-Tex 68, E. Kentucky 68
Chattanooga 74, Samford 67, 2OT
Furman 71, Elon 66
Georgia St. 73, Southern 67
Morgan St. 65, Delaware St. 54
New York St. 84, Morehead St. 81
Norfolk St. 79, Howard 74
MIDWEST
Michigan St. 91, Minnesota 81
Nebraska 94, Penn St. 74
SOUTHWEST
Baylor 96, Oklahoma 89
LeTourneau 67, E. Texas Baptist 63
Ark-La-Tex 68, Southern 67, Arkansas 64
FAR WEST
Washington 87, Grand St. 69
TOURNAMENT
Old Dominion Athletic Conference
First Round
Brigawater (Va.) 76, Emory & Henry 51

Tennis

Monday
At The Fairmont Acapulco Princess
Mexico City, Mexico
Purse: Men, \$1.45 million (W7500); Women, \$250,000 (Int'l.)
Surface: Clay-Outdoor
Singles
First Round
Jeremy Chardy, France, def. Matthew Ebden, Australia, 6-4, 6-3
Dudi Sela, Israel, def. Alejandro Falla, Colombia, 6-1, 6-4
Sam Querrey, United States, def. Tigran Harkn, Mexico, 6-1, 6-3

Women
First Round
Christina McHale, United States, def. Kristina Mladenovic, France, 6-4, 6-2
Alia Tomljanovic, Croatia, def. Magdalena Rybarikova (4), Slovakia, 6-1, 6-3
Bianca Andreescu, New Zealand, def. Ana Sofia Sanchez, Mexico, 6-2, 6-2
Bojana Jovanovski (5), Serbia, def. Tamarine Tanasugarn, Thailand, 6-4, 6-2
Kimiko Date-Krumm, Japan, def. Stefania Voegele (7), Switzerland, 3-6, 7-5 (5), 6-4

Doubles
Men
First Round
Lukasz Kubot, Poland, and Robert Lindstedt (1), Sweden, def. Grigor Dimitrov, Bulgaria, and Jiri Hronek, Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-3
Philippine, Philippines, and Dominic Inglot (3), Britain, def. Colin Fleming and Ross Hutchins, Britain, 7-6 (3), 6-3
Juan Pablo Varillas and Miguel Angel Reyes-Huerta, Mexico, def. Marinko Matosevic, Australia, and Vasek Pospisil, Canada, 6-4, 6-4

Women
First Round
Julia Grogniez and Anna-Lena Grogniez, def. Ljiljana Dacic and Gabriela Rodriguez, and Marcela Zacarias, Mexico, 6-4, 6-0
Chia-jung Tung, Taiwan, and Zhang Shuai, China, def. Gabriela Dabrowski, Canada, and Gabriela Dabrowski, Canada, 6-4, 6-0
Stephanie Foretz Gacon, France, and Eva Hrdinova, Czech Republic, def. Caroline Garcia, France, and Olga Melnikova (4), Georgia, 6-3, 4-6, 10-8
Lucy Karsch, Germany, and Anna Tatishvili, Georgia, 6-2, 6-6, 10-8

Pro hockey

NHL

| Atlantic Division | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|-----|
| W | L | OT | Pts |
| Boston | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Montreal | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Ottawa | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Quebec | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Tampa Bay | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
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| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| San Jose | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Washington | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Winnipeg | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Arizona | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Calgary | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Edmonton | 57 | 36 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 57 | 36 | 4</ |

NFL

Character Q & A pivotal

Players must convince teams their troubles are over

By MICHAEL MAROT
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Colt Lyster came to the NFL scouting combine with more to prove than just about anyone else.

Not on the field, off of it.

Two months after the former Oregon tight end pleaded guilty to cocaine possession, he was answering questions in Indianapolis about why his life went astray and trying to convince league scouts that his troubled days are over.

"I'd say that I've put myself in a position where my back's against the wall, to a point that if I don't do everything perfect and the right way, that I won't be able to play football, let alone be successful in any shape or form," Lyster told reporters with a stone-faced expression.

Convincing coaches and team officials that he's changed might be the most important part of the draft process for Lyster, and history shows the wrong answers could seriously damage his prospects.

Teams routinely claim they remove college players from their draft boards for serious character flaws. It came up again after former Patriots tight end Aaron Hernandez was arrested last summer.

Da'Rick Rogers showed up at last year's combine with the size and stats scouts covet. But after admitting he was booted off the team at Tennessee because of multiple failed drug tests, Rogers wound up signing with Buffalo as an undrafted rookie, and then was cut and landed on the Colts' practice squad before finally making an active roster.

Now it's Lyster's turn. While he measured in at 6 feet 4, 242 pounds and turned in an impressive time of 4.61 seconds in the 40-yard dash, Lyster must now show he's a different guy from the one some have branded as overly emotional and prone to outbursts.

It matters to teams, which have spent lots of time and money delving into player backgrounds, and an answer to the team "are you really getting on draft weekend?"

"We tended to separate the stories from the facts. I think that's important for readers and spectators and fans to recognize — what may be a hot media story may not be an answer to the team," NFL executive Bill Pollan said. "When we found out what happened with Manti Te'o, it was no longer an issue."

This year's biggest question marks include players who were suspended by coaches for Twitter posts, players who publicly castigated fans, drug-related suspensions, arrests, one player who punched a teammate, and one accused of helping to cover-up an alleged rape after the fact.

How players and agents handle the weekend's questions depends on the strategy — and the nature of the issue.



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Oregon tight end Colt Lyster, who was asked repeatedly by the media about how he turned his life around following a cocaine arrest last fall, will face tougher questions from NFL teams.

"I'd say that I've put myself in a position where my back's against the wall, to a point that if I don't do everything perfect and the right way, that I won't be able to play football, let alone be successful in any shape or form."

Colt Lyster

Tight end at the NFL combine

George Atkinson, a running back who was suspended for Notre Dame's bowl game, and Lyster walked into the media room and responded to the more difficult questions with blunt answers.

Lyster told reporters the key to staying on track was avoiding people who could be bad influences. Atkinson said he was "stupid" for continuing a phone conversation during a team meal even after coach Brian Kelly asked him to end the call.

Linebacker Max Bullough, the former Michigan State star, showed up but repeatedly refused to answer questions about his Rose Bowl suspension, choosing instead to say NFL teams already knew the answer.

Former Vanderbilt receiver Chris Boyd, who was kicked off the team for his alleged role in the cover-up, didn't show up in the media room.

And after Walter Powell acknowledged teams were asking about his reported October arrest for fourth-degree assault and unlawful theft, charges that were later dropped when a grand jury failed to indict, the Murray State receiver was asked what he had learned from the situation.

"I just learned to overcome adversity, and also just pick women right," he said.

The issue of drug use is becoming more complicated in light of states like Colorado and Wash-

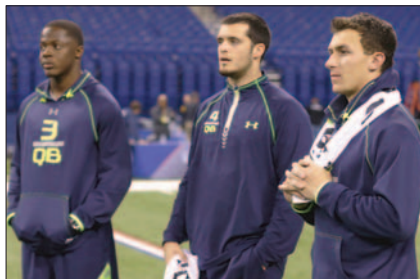
ington legalizing marijuana and others considering or already legalizing medical marijuana.

So will it hurt former University of Miami offensive lineman Seantrel Henderson now that he's acknowledged his college suspensions were related to marijuana use? Perhaps.

"I will say this, there has been a tendency in the public mind to look upon marijuana more leniently. I'm not sure that's true of clubs," said Pollan, now an ESPN analyst. "My experience with people is that the performance of those who use marijuana on a regular basis, as reported on verified official tests, has not been good. In fact, it's been abysmal. So I haven't bought into the fact that it's harmless."

Lyster insists that after meeting with his family, serving one night in jail, nine more days on a road crew and pondering a life without football, he's cleaned up and removed the bad influences from his life.

All he has to do now is prove it. "As much as I hate to say it, I think some of the mishaps that happened and me getting in trouble probably is the best thing that's happened to me," he said. "I think the biggest thing for me is just to be honest and to show remorse, where remorse is due, and just do my best to prove that I've changed and I'm changing and I've matured since I made those mistakes."



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Quarterbacks, from right, Johnny Manziel, Derek Carr and Teddy Bridgewater watch drills at the NFL scouting combine in Indianapolis, on Sunday.

Minnesota's scouts busy scrutinizing QBs at combine

By DAVE KAMPEL
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The Minnesota Vikings spent the week-end at the NFL scouting combine pouring over quarterbacks, as thoroughly as any other team in the league.

They're among the frustrated few — well, there's more than a few clubs without a quarterback solution — who badly need this draft to produce a long-term answer at the most important position. The good news for them is that this year's class is considered a deep one.

The Vikings are also in a potentially awkward place with the eighth pick in the first round. None of the top three prospects, Johnny Manziel, Teddy Bridgewater or Blake Bortles, is likely to still be available to them unless they find a willing partner and use other selections to move up.

As evidenced by the performance of Christian Ponder, the 12th overall pick in a similarly quarterback-deep

"Obviously, the position is a big need in this league. But it's going to be fun, really."

Mike Zimmer
Viking coach

2011 draft, there's a risk in reaching even if the position is the biggest need on the roster.

So the Vikings, if they determine the top three are either impossible or unsatisfying for them, are sure to be giving the top four a hard look as well over the next 2½ months. "Obviously, the position is a big need in this league. But it's going to be fun, really. I get to look at some of the best guys and try to figure it out," coach Mike Zimmer said. "Let's hit on the right one, and let's go to work."

He added: "I have the utmost confidence in the scouts and the front office people. I feel really good about it. If I didn't, I'd be worried but I'm not."

Zimmer's background is defense. General manager Rick Spielman, responsible for the Ponder pick, has yet to procure a proven franchise quarterback in his time as a lead decision-maker for either Miami or Minnesota. But the Vikings have an ace in hand who will have a heavy influence on the process, offensive coordinator Norv Turner.

"Ultimately, that will be my call and my responsibility, but you hire people that are experts in their areas to give a strong opinion on that," Spielman said.

Spielman has provided candid public evaluations this month of Ponder and his failure to establish himself as the unquestioned starter. He said an ideal scenario for this season will be to sign a veteran (Matt Cassel is the favorite, to bring back), keep Ponder

(he's the only one currently under contract) and draft a rookie.

"Are we going to force a quarterback at No. 8? We're going to take the best player, unless we're absolutely in love with a guy. If we're in love with a guy, and they might go before us, we may move up in the draft," Spielman said.

"If not, I would love to move down in the draft, if we possibly could. There's so many good players that you're going to get good players in the third and fourth rounds, for as deep as this draft class is."

Among the quarterbacks who could fit that strategy: Jimmy Garoppolo of Eastern Illinois, A.J. McCarron of Alabama, Zach Mettenberger of Louisiana State, Aaron Murray of Georgia and Connor Shaw of South Carolina. Mettenberger and Murray are coming off knee injuries.

"If the rookie doesn't have to play, it's a great advantage for those guys to sit and learn for a year until they're actually ready," Spielman said.

NFL/SPORTS BRIEFS

Union rep: Bullying fallout overblown

Dolphins' Denney says he's confident that similar behavior occurs in all locker-rooms

By STEVEN WINE
The Associated Press

DAVIE, Fla. — The players' union representative from the Miami Dolphins says the fallout from their bullying scandal is overblown because every NFL team has a similar locker-room culture.

Long snapper John Denney, a nine-year veteran, said Monday he hadn't read the investigative report on the Dolphins case. But any harassment among players is nothing new, he said.

"It's overblown, because this has been my experience with the league my entire career from Day One," Denney said in a telephone interview. "If something needed to be done, it needed to be done a long time ago. It has never escalated. I never saw conditions worsen. I guess we're late in getting to the issue."

"I would be comfortable in saying if you put an investigation on any of the 32 teams in the NFL, you're going to come out with the exact same results."

In a report released Feb. 14, investigators found guard Richie Incognito and two other offensive linemen engaged in persistent harassment directed at tackle Jonathan Martin, another offensive lineman and an assistant trainer. Denney, at 35 the Dolphins' oldest player, said behavior among players was no different last year than when his NFL career began

in 2005. Bullying of rookies was common then, too, he said.

"When I came into the league, I assumed I was going to accept it or find a different line of work," Denney said. "I don't agree with the lifestyles of some of guys on the team, but if I have an issue, I can address it with individual people. If I felt uncomfortable with a situation, I would address it or find something else to do."

Denney made his comments following a celebrity golf tournament organized by former Dolphins star Jason Taylor that included several current players.

Quarterback Ryan Tannehill said he's confident the necessary changes will be made to ensure a healthy locker-room environment.

"I saw a few pages of it," Tannehill said. "I got overwhelmed by 140-and-whatever pages and skipped it. I'm just glad it's out. The evaluations and summaries have been made, the points have been taken and now we can move forward. We've had the consequences and repercussions and now we can put it in the past and move forward."

The Dolphins fired offensive line coach Jim Turner and athletic trainer Kevin O'Neill for their roles in the scandal, and coach Joe Philbin pledged to improve the workplace culture.

NFL punishment of players who engaged in harassment may be forthcoming in the form of fines, suspensions or both. Tannehill could find him playing behind an entirely new line to start the 2014 season.

John Denney
Miami Dolphins' players union representative

"I would be comfortable in saying if you put an investigation on any of the 32 teams in the NFL, you're going to come out with the same exact results."



WILLIE J. ALLEN JR./AP

New York Knicks' Raymond Felton (2) surrendered to police early Tuesday and was charged with three counts of criminal possession of a weapon for not being registered to own the firearm.

Briefly

Felton arrested on gun charges

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York Knicks point guard Raymond Felton was arrested Tuesday on weapons charges after a lawyer for Felton's wife turned in a loaded gun allegedly belonging to the basketball star, saying she didn't want it in her home, police said.

Felton turned himself in at 12:50 a.m. Tuesday, not long after the Knicks lost to the Dallas Mavericks at home, police said.

But before the Monday night game, an attorney for Ariane Raymondo-Felton arrived at a Manhattan police precinct with a Belgian-made FN Herstal pistol, police spokesman Sgt. Lee Jones said. Raymondo-Felton later went to the precinct and made a statement to detectives, police said.

Investigators then contacted the director of security at Madison Square Garden in an attempt to reach Felton, police said.

Felton made no statement after he arrived at the precinct with a lawyer, police said. He was ex-

pected to be arraigned later Tuesday on three charges of criminal possession of a weapon in the second, third and fourth degrees. Police said the charges don't stem from Felton using the firearm in a menacing manner but from possessing an unregistered gun.

In other NBA news:

■ Oklahoma City Thunder center Kendrick Perkins will miss six weeks after a medical procedure on his left groin.

■ Atlanta Hawks All-Star forward Paul Millsap will be held out at least two more games with a right knee contusion.

Trotters sign three-point ace with Down syndrome

PHILADELPHIA — Kevin Grow, a high school senior with Down syndrome who became an Internet hit with his three-point shooting, will play next month for the Harlem Globetrotters.

Grow will suit up for the Globetrotters on March 9 in Philadel-

phia. Grow, a devout Globetrotters fan from suburban Philadelphia, was added to the roster Tuesday as their three-point specialist.

Ex-IOC chief Rogge to get honorary knighthood

LONDON — Former Olympics chief Jacques Rogge of Belgium received an honorary knighthood from Britain on Tuesday.

Princess Anne, Britain's member of the International Olympic Committee, presented the award to Rogge at Buckingham Palace.

Rogge, the IOC president from 2001 to 2013, was honored for his service to the Olympics.

Mayweather set to face Maidana on May 3

LAS VEGAS — Floyd Mayweather (45-0, 26 KOs) is scheduled to face WBA welterweight champion Marcos Maidana (35-3, 31 KOs) on May 3 in a bout to unify their 147-pound titles.

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NBA



Jason DeCrow/AP

The Mavericks' Dirk Nowitzki works to get open before shooting the game-winning basket against New York Knicks' Carmelo Anthony in the final seconds Monday in New York. Dallas won 110-108.

Roundup

Nowitzki gets 'ugly' for win

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Dirk Nowitzki called it "probably the ugliest game-winner I ever shot," and this is how he described it. "Basically it hit the board, every part of it, hit Jerry West over there (the logo on the backboard), came back over and it was definitely an ugly, ugly shot," he said.

But when the 19-foot jumper bounced up and then fell in as time expired, the Dallas Mavericks had a 110-108 victory over the New York Knicks on Monday night.

The Mavericks blew an eight-point lead in the final 90 seconds, then pulled out their third straight victory when Nowitzki's jumper that seemed to have missed landed right through.

"I didn't even feel like celebrating it was so ugly," Nowitzki said.

His teammates and Mavericks owner Mark Cuban did it for him, rushing onto the floor after Dallas moved into seventh place in the Western Conference.

The Mavericks blew 44 points and nine rebounds for the Knicks. He played strong defense on the Mavericks' final possession, but was left standing in disbelief long after the buzzer after Nowitzki's shot appeared to hit the backboard first, then the front rim, then bounced up before dropping.

"It was like a needle in a balloon right there," Anthony said. "It sucks all the air out of you. He hit a hell of a shot."

Vince Carter made seven three-pointers and scored a season-high 23 points. Monta Ellis had 22 from Dallas (35-23), which has won nine of 11 and a season-best 12 games over .500.

Jose Calderon finished with 20 points for the Mavericks, who swept a three-game road trip and beat the Knicks for the 20th time in the last 25 meetings. Nowitzki had just 15 points after missing all five three-point attempts.

"That's one thing about the greatest players. I played with [Larry] Bird for three years. He took more pleasure in hitting a game-winning shot after he missed eight or nine in a row than having a great game at times," Dallas coach Rick Carlisle said.

Tyson Chandler had 12 points and 12 rebounds against his former team, sparking the Knicks' comeback after they trailed 108-100 with 1:37 left. But New York (21-36) lost for the sixth time in seven games and fell a season-worst 15 games below .500.

Bucks 130, 76ers 110: O.J. Mayo made seven three-pointers and scored 25 points, Ersan Ilyasova added 20, and Milwaukee played seven players in double figures in a rout of Philadelphia, which lost its 11th straight game.

Ramon Sessions had 16 points, Khrist Middelton and Brandon Knight scored 15 each, and Giannis Antetokounmpo posted 13 for the visiting Bucks (11-45), who own the NBA's worst record. John Henson clipped in 12 points for the Bucks, who had their highest scoring game of the season.

Philadelphia (15-42), which has the league's second worst record, has lost 21 of 24 and 10 straight at home. It is the club's longest skid since a 12-game losing streak during the 1996-97 season.

Warriors 104, Pistons 96: Stephen Curry had 19 points, nine assists and eight rebounds,

and Golden State clamped down on Detroit in the second half of a victory.

Klay Thompson scored 19 points for Golden State, which has won four in a row. The Pistons have lost five of seven since firing Maurice Cheeks and replacing him with interim coach John Loyer.

The Warriors were still without David Lee, who has been dealing with a stomach flu. Andrew Bogut returned from a left shoulder injury and played 29 minutes before fouling out.

Clippers 123, Pelicans 110: Jamal Crawford hit seven threes on his way to 24 points, and the visiting Los Angeles Clippers beat New Orleans.

Crawford picked up where he left off in Oklahoma City on Sunday, when he made five three-pointers and finished with 36 points in Los Angeles' victory.

Chris Paul had 19 points and 13 assists in his latest return to New Orleans, and Blake Griffin added 22 points. All five Clippers starters and two reserves scored in double figures.

DeAndre Jordan had 14 points and 16 rebounds.

Jazz 110, Celtics 98: Alec Burks had 21 points, and Derrick Favors scored 20 in his return from a hip injury to power back Utah to a rare win over Boston, which lost its fifth straight game.

Favors had missed the previous three games because of a sprained right hip injury he aggravated in the opening minutes against Philadelphia on Feb. 12. But the center established himself early with four baskets and bolstered Utah's leaky defense.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

| Atlantic Division | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| Toronto | 31 | 25 | |
| Brooklyn | 26 | 28 | .481 |
| New York | 25 | 29 | .461 |
| Boston | 19 | 39 | .328 |
| Philadelphia | 15 | 42 | .263 |

| Southeast Division | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| Miami | 40 | 14 | .741 |
| Washington | 28 | 26 | .519 |
| Charlotte | 27 | 30 | .474 |
| Atlanta | 26 | 43 | .379 |
| Orlando | 17 | 41 | .293 |

| Central Division | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| Indiana | 31 | 23 | .764 |
| Chicago | 29 | 26 | .527 |
| Portland | 28 | 28 | .500 |
| Cleveland | 22 | 35 | .386 |
| Milwaukee | 11 | 45 | .196 |

Western Conference

| Southwest Division | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| San Antonio | 30 | 16 | .714 |
| Houston | 38 | 18 | .679 |
| Dallas | 23 | 23 | .500 |
| Memphis | 31 | 24 | .564 |
| New Orleans | 23 | 33 | .417 |

| Northwest Division | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| Oklahoma City | 43 | 14 | .754 |
| Portland | 30 | 16 | .714 |
| Minnesota | 27 | 28 | .491 |
| Denver | 20 | 35 | .362 |
| Utah | 20 | 36 | .357 |

| Pacific Division | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|
| | W | L | Pct |
| L.A. Clippers | 39 | 20 | .661 |
| Phoenix | 35 | 22 | .614 |
| Sacramento | 33 | 22 | .600 |
| L.A. Lakers | 19 | 37 | .337 |
| Lakers | 19 | 37 | .337 |

Sunday's games

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| L.A. Clippers 125, Oklahoma City 117 | |
| Miami 95, Chicago 79 | |
| Washington 96, Cleveland 83 | |
| Toronto 105, Orlando 90 | |
| Portland 109, Denver 85 | |
| Brooklyn 108, L.A. Lakers 102 | |
| Portland 116, Minnesota 97 | |
| Houston 115, Phoenix 112 | |

Monday's games

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Milwaukee 130, Philadelphia 110 | |
| Dallas 110, New York 108 | |
| L.A. Clippers 123, New Orleans 110 | |
| Utah 116, Boston 98 | |

Tuesday's games

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| L.A. Lakers at Indiana | |
| Orlando at Washington | |
| Toronto at Cleveland | |
| Chicago at Atlanta | |
| Minnesota at Phoenix | |
| Portland at Denver | |
| Houston at Sacramento | |

Wednesday's games

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Atlanta at Philadelphia | |
| Chicago at Boston | |
| Lakers at Memphis | |
| Detroit at San Antonio | |
| Phoenix at Utah | |
| Brooklyn at Portland | |
| Houston at L.A. Clippers | |

Thursday

Jazz 110, Celtics 98

| | |
|--|--|
| Celtics — Green 7-16 5-6 21, Bass 2-11 4-6, Humphries 4-10 1-1 9, Rondo 6-13 6-18, Wallace 2-2 0-0, Olynyk 8-13 4-14 21, Bayless 6-11 0-13, Anthony 0-0 0-0 0, Johnson 2-7 0-0, Pressley 0-1 0-0 0, Totals 87-84 20-21 10. | |
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| Jazz — Ersan 2-6 3-5 10, Williams 8-10 1-13, Favors 9-4 4-20, Burke 5-16 0-12, Hayward 4-11 0-8, Kanter 4-9 4-14 23, Burks 2-0-0 4, Burke 2-5 2-1, Garret 2-3 0-4, Totals 44-80 16-21 11. | |
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| Celtics — Anderson 3-6 3-5 10, Williams 8-10 1-13, Favors 9-4 4-20, Burke 5-16 0-12, Hayward 4-11 0-8, Kanter 4-9 4-14 23, Burks 2-0-0 4, Burke 2-5 2-1, Garret 2-3 0-4, Totals 44-80 16-21 11. | |
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| Three-Point Goals — Boston 4-15 (Green 2-6, Bayless 1-2, Olynyk 1-2, Pressley 0-1, Johnson 0-4), Utah 7 (Williams 2-2, Johnson 1-2, Jefferson 1-2, Garret 0-1, Hayward 0-4), Fouled Out — None, Rebounds — Boston 44 (Olynyk, Bass 8), Celtics 32 (Sessions 5), Philadelphia 16 (Rondo 10), Utah 25 (Hayward 10), Totals 104-98 20-21 11. | |
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| Clippers 123, Pelicans 110 | |
| L.A. CLIPPERS — Barnes 4-6 2-12, Griffin 6-12 10-14 22, Jordan 7-10 0-1-14, Paul 6-10 17-19, Crawford 8-17 11-24, Collison 10-10 1-12, Dudley 2-5 0-0 5, Thornton 4-10 10-12, Hollins 0-0 0-0 0, Backs 3-3 3-3 3, Totals 43-82 21-26 13. | |

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| NEW ORLEANS — Aminu 4-9 3-13 12, A.Davis 7-16 12-26, Siemian 2-2 0-0 2, Roberts 1-3 2-2 4, Gordon 4-6 0-0 10, Aljina 7-13 5-19, Evans 4-13 0-28, Rivers 3-8 3-10, Babbitt 1-3 0-0 3, Morrow 4-10 3-14, Withey 1-3 2-3, Totals 37-87 20-21 11. | |
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| L.A. CLIPPERS — Barnes 4-6 2-12, Griffin 6-12 10-14 22, Jordan 7-10 0-1-14, Paul 6-10 17-19, Crawford 8-17 11-24, Collison 10-10 1-12, Dudley 2-5 0-0 5, Thornton 4-10 10-12, Hollins 0-0 0-0 0, Backs 3-3 3-3 3, Totals 43-82 21-26 13. | |
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| NEW ORLEANS — Aminu 4-9 3-13 12, A.Davis 7-16 12-26, Siemian 2-2 0-0 2, Roberts 1-3 2-2 4, Gordon 4-6 0-0 10, Aljina 7-13 5-19, Evans 4-13 0-28, Rivers 3-8 3-10, Babbitt 1-3 0-0 3, Morrow 4-10 3-14, Withey 1-3 2-3, Totals 37-87 20-21 11. | |
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Mavericks 110, Knicks 108

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| DALLAS — Marion 2-6 0-0 4, Nowitzki 6-13 3-15, Dalember 2-5 2-6 4, Calderon 6-9 3-3 20, Ellis 9-22 2-2 2, Carter 7-0 20 23, Blair 0-0 1-2, Harris 0-3 2-2, Ellington 5-0 0-0 5, Wright 6-8 0-2 2, Crowder 0-0 0-0 0, Totals 41-86 13-16 110. | |
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| NEW YORK — Carmelo 14-23 9-9 44, Stoudemire 3-5 3-9, Chandler 5-2 4 12, Feltton 3-4 0-0 8, Prigioni 3-5 0-8 8, Smith 7-16 0-0 15, Hardaway 2-10 0-0 0, Tyler 0-1 0-0 0, Aldrich 1-1 0-0 2, Totals 40-76 14-16 108. | |
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| Dallas | 31 | 29 | 24 | 26-110 |
| New York | 21 | 28 | 23 | 26-108 |

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| Three-Point Goals — Dallas 13-36 (Carter 7-12, Calderon 5-8, Ellis 2-6, Ellington 1-2, Harris 0-1, Marion 0-2, Nowitzki 0-5), New York 14-33 (Anthony 7-12, Feltton 2-3, Prigioni 2-4, Hardaway Jr. 2-8, Smith 2-8), Fouled Out — None, Rebounds — Dallas 39 (Dalember 10), New York 47 (Chandler 12), Assists — Dallas 27 (Harris 8), New York 23 (Feltton, Smith 7), Total Fouls — Dallas 19, New York 24, Technicals — Dallas defensive three second, Smith, A-19,812 (19/763). | |
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Warriors 104, Pistons 96

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| GOLDEN STATE — Igoudala 2-10 0-0 4, O'Neal 6-9 4-0 16, Bogut 1-5 2-4 4, Curry 6-15 4-5 19, Thompson 8-12 1-1 19, Barnes 4-8 1-2 11, Blake 2-5 0-0 6, Green 3-4 0-0 6, Crawford 2-11 1-2 8, Reddick 1-4 2-2 2, Totals 38-82 15-22 104. | |
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| DETROIT — Smith 9-24 0-3 18, Monroe 8-20 7-9 23, Drummond 5-8 1-2 11, Jennings 4-11 1-1 11, Bynum 4-11 1-1 10, Stuckey 2-10 0-1 5, Bynum 4-11 0-0 8, Jerodick 1-2 0-2, Caldwell-Pope 0-0 0-0 0, Totals 40-99 12-18 96. | |
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| Golden State | 31 | 30 | 23 | 104 |
| Detroit | 27 | 25 | 21 | 96 |

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| Three-Point Goals — Golden State 13-31 (Crawford 4-8, Curry 3-9, Barnes 2-3, Thompson 2-3, Blake 2-5, Igoudala 0-5), Detroit 4-13 (Singer 2-4, Jennings 2-6, O'Neal 1-1, Bynum 0-1, Stuckey 1-3), Fouled Out — Bogut, Rebounds — Golden State 58 (Smith 10), Detroit 58 (Smith 11), Assists — Golden State 27 (Curry 9), Detroit 26 (Jennings 10), Total Fouls — Golden State 19, Detroit 23, Technicals — Green, O'Neal, Golden State defensive three second, Drummond, Smith, A-14,071 (22/076). | |
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Bucks 130, 76ers 110

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| MILWAUKEE — Middleton 4-6 5-15, Ilyasova 7-9 6-6 20, Pechulia 1-3 0-0 2, Knight 5-10 4-5 15, Woltters 3-5 0-0 6, Antetokounmpo 5-8 2-13, Mayo 8-14 2-2 25, Henson 6-8 0-4 12, Sessions 6-11 3-18, Adrien 3-4 0-0 6, Reddick 0-0 0-0 0, Totals 48-82 20-23 130. | |
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| PHILADELPHIA — Anderson 5-11 0-0 13, Sims 11-19 3-24, Moutrie 2-6 2-6 6, Carter-Williams 7-11 6-28 20, Thompson 1-1 1-15, Sims 1-19 4-4 4, Williams 1-5 0-0 2, Thompson 3-7 1-11 6, Bynum 0-5 1-10, Mullens 4-6 0-9 20, Totals 43-88 16-23 110. | |
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|--------------|----|----|----|-----|
| Milwaukee | 30 | 43 | 24 | 130 |
| Philadelphia | 22 | 16 | 32 | 110 |

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| Three-Point Goals — Milwaukee 12-20 (Mayo 7-9, Middleton 2-3, Sessions 1-1), Antetokounmpo 1-2, Knight 1-2, Ilyasova 0-1, Woltters 0-2, Philadelphia 8-24 (Anderson 4-7, Young 2-4, Thompson 1-1), Mullens 1-2, Carter-Williams 0-2, Maynor 0-2, Williams 0-2, Fouled Out — None, Rebounds — Milwaukee 54 (Adrien 10), Philadelphia 41 (Moutrie 8), Assists — Milwaukee 32 (Sessions 5), Philadelphia 28 (Young 7), Total Fouls — Milwaukee 21, Philadelphia 32 (Adrien 10, Sessions 5). | |
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Calendar

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| April 16 — Last day of regular season. | |
| April 19 — NBA Finals begin. | |
| May 2 — Draft lottery. | |
| May 5 — NBA Finals begin. | |

CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Pistons forward Greg Monroe, left, and Warriors forward Harrison Barnes battle for a loose ball during the second half on Monday at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia. The Warriors won 104-96.

NHL

Sabres' Miller still on the market

Buffalo is shopping the goaltender as trade deadline nears, source says

By JOHN WAWROW
The Associated Press

Ryan Miller was a no-show at the Buffalo Sabres' practice Monday because the star goalie was still traveling from the Sochi Games.



Though Miller was scheduled to return later in the day and start Tuesday, when Buffalo hosts Carolina, his absence could be something the Sabres will have to get accustomed to with the NHL trade deadline approaching on March 5.

A person familiar with discussions told The Associated Press that general manager Tim Murray continues to pursue offers for Miller with the intention of trading him by next week.

"Tim is testing the waters as hard as he can," the person said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because Murray declined to speak to reporters Monday.

The person said the team's first option is trading Miller, who is in the final year of his contract and eligible to become an unrestricted free agent. Option No. 2, the person added, would be making a bid to re-sign Miller if a trade can't be completed.

Murray, who took over the Sa-

'Certainly, what Ryan Miller means to this team and this town, no question you'd like to keep him. But it's business. And we have to look forward to rebuilding this organization.'

Ted Nolan

Buffalo Sabres interim head coach

bres last month, had previously not ruled out trading Miller or anyone else on the roster.

"This team's in last place right now," Murray said, during his inaugural news conference on Jan. 9. "Everybody can be traded."

That means Miller isn't the only player with an uncertain future on a Sabres team that, at 15-34-8, remains in last place coming out of the NHL Olympic break.

Captain Steve Ott, veteran winger Matt Moulson and defenseman Henrik Tallinder are also in the final years of their contracts and could be used as trade bait to a team intent on building through youth.

Following practice, interim head coach Ted Nolan said it would be safe to assume the Sabres will be active in making trades.

"I think that's the key right there,

not knowing," Nolan said. "We can't worry about who might be gone, who might be coming in. Today is the day we have to work with what we've got. And tomorrow, whatever we've got here, then we'll work with that, too."

Nolan also had a different take on his thoughts regarding Miller. After previously saying he favored the Sabres retaining Miller, Nolan said the decision was out of his hands.

"Certainly, what Ryan Miller

means to this team and this town, no question you'd like to keep him. But it's business. And we have to look forward to rebuilding this organization," Nolan said.

In 11 seasons in Buffalo, the 33-year-old has set franchise records with 283 wins and 539 games played.

With a 14-22-3 record, Miller accounts for all but one of Buffalo's victories. His .923 save percentage ranks seventh among goalies with 30 or more starts.

Miller won the NHL's Vezina Trophy in 2010, the same year he earned MVP honors at the Vancouver Games, where he played a key role in leading the United States to a silver medal. At Sochi, he was in a backup role behind Los Angeles' Jonathan Quick.

The Sabres are in a tough spot as far as goaltending entering the game against the Hurricanes (26-22-9). Aside from Miller, backup goalie Jhonas Enroth was also at the Olympics as a backup to Swedish starter Henrik Lundqvist.

Nolan made the decision to have Miller start against Carolina because the U.S. has been off since a 5-0 loss to Finland in the bronze medal game on Saturday. Sweden played Sunday when it lost the gold medal game to Canada.

The trade deadline has become a hot topic of discussion in the Sabres locker room.

"I think you guys in the media as a whole have been telling me I've been getting traded since the first day I got here," said Moulson, who was acquired in October in a trade that sent Thomas Vanek to the New York Islanders.

"Sometimes it's a little stressful. But I think when you tell yourself to control what you can control, it kind of calms me down a bit. I'm going to go out there and play hard, and whatever happens, happens."

The Buffalo Sabres' Ryan Miller, who won the Vezina Trophy as the NHL's best goaltender in 2010, will be an unrestricted free agent at the end of this season. Miller has played his entire 11-year career in Buffalo.

DIRK SHADO, TAMPA BAY TIMES/MCT



Tampa Bay Lightning forward Steven Stamkos will miss at least four more games before returning from his injury.

Notes

Stamkos not ready to join Lightning

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla.—Injured Tampa Bay Lightning star Steven Stamkos is recovering, but not ready yet to return to the lineup.

Stamkos is sitting out a four-game, post-Olympic trip that starts Thursday at Nashville.

Stamkos underwent X-rays on Monday that revealed that his broken right shin, which has sidelined him since November, is improving but not enough for him to be cleared to play in games.

The center will travel with the team to continue practicing, and is expected to be examined again when the Lightning return for a homestand that begins March 6 against Buffalo.

Stamkos was injured on Nov. 11 at Boston and underwent surgery. He has 14 goals and 23 points in 17 games this season. The injury kept Stamkos from playing for Canada in the Sochi Olympics.

Blue Jackets put Tyutin on injured reserve list

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Columbus Blue Jackets have placed Fedor Tyutin on injured reserve after the defenseman was hurt playing for Russia in the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

Tyutin injured an ankle and is expected to miss two to three weeks. He has four goals, 20 assists and 30 penalty minutes in 53 games this season.

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MLB

Darvish opening day starter

SURPRISE, Ariz. — Yu Darvish will be the opening day starter for the Rangers.

Manager Ron Washington said he informed Darvish on Tuesday morning the right-hander from Japan will start March 31 against Philadelphia at home.

Darvish is going into his third major league season. He started the second game last season, when he came within one out of a perfect game against Houston. He went on to lead the majors with 277 strikeouts and finish second in the AL Cy Young Award voting.

The last Rangers starter with consecutive opening day starts was Kevin Millwood from 2006 to 2009.

Darvish will be the sixth different opening day starter in six years for Texas. Matt Harrison started last year's opener.

■ Washington finally has a contract past this season to manage the Rangers.

After a busy offseason in which they added Prince Fielder and Shin-Soo Choo to their lineup, and more than a week into spring training, the Rangers on Monday added a year to Washington's contract through the 2015 season.

Washington is the team's winningest manager with 611 wins over seven seasons, and led Texas to its only two World Series appearances in 2010 and 2011. The Rangers have averaged more than 91 wins over the last five seasons.

Cruz, Orioles finalize contract

SARASOTA, Fla. — Outfielder Nelson Cruz and the Baltimore Orioles finalized an \$8 million, one-year contract Monday, a deal that puts him on track to become the team's regular designated hitter.

The 33-year-old, who served a 50-game suspension last year for violating baseball's drug agreement, can earn an additional \$750,000 in bonuses based on days on the active 25-man roster: \$150,000 each for 60, 90, 120, 150 and 180.

He turned down a \$14.1 million qualifying offer from Texas in November. Because of the qualifying offer, Baltimore forfeits its second-round selection in June's amateur draft, the 55th pick overall.

Cruz hit .266 last season with 27 homers and 76 RBIs in 109 games. The suspension cost him \$2,732,240 of his \$10 million salary.

Padres' Headley has calf injury

PEORIA, Ariz. — An MRI exam Tuesday confirmed a Grade 1 calf strain for San Diego Padres third baseman Chase Headley.

San Diego manager Bud Black said Tuesday morning that Headley was feeling better.

He said the exam does not change the expected timeline for his recovery. Headley is expected to be out two to three weeks recovering from the strain of his right calf.

Headley was injured during a drill last Saturday.

Chacin out another week

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Colorado Rockies starting pitcher Jhoulys Chacin will be sidelined at least another week with a sore throwing shoulder.

The Rockies learned the results of Chacin's MRI on Tuesday morning. The team announced he has right shoulder inflammation, but no structural damage.

Chacin was Colorado's top right-handed starter in 2013, going 14-10 with a 3.47 ERA. But he was limited since the start of spring training and had yet to throw off the mound before he was shut down on Sunday.

Chacin said Tuesday that his shoulder was feeling better, but the injury could prevent him from being ready for the start of the regular season.



HYUSIE, ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION/MCT

Atlanta rookie catcher Evan Gattis hits a two-run single against Colorado during a game last season at Turner Field in Atlanta.

Raising his expectations

Braves' Gattis focusing on replacing McCann at catcher

By JEFF BERLINCKE
The Associated Press

When Evan Gattis made Atlanta's opening-day roster last season, the rookie slugger became one of the biggest stories for the Braves.

For Year 2, he wants the focus to be on his play.

Gattis is expected to serve as Atlanta's primary catcher after Brian McCann signed a free-agent deal with the New York Yankees. Gattis hit .243 with 21 homers and 65 RBIs in 2013, completing a winding road to the majors.

"I want as much playing time as I can get," he said after a full-squad workout. "I want constant at-bats and I want to keep going every day. I want to play every day and I loved last season, but this year I want a little more. I am not taking everything for granted. Last year was nice but it's a new year."

What made Gattis so compelling last season was the journey he took to the pros. After high school, there were bouts with drugs and alcohol, not to mention plenty of dark days where the thought of killing himself seemed like a good way out. The fear of failing at baseball proved overwhelming, prompting him to quit when he was only 19.

He worked a series of menial jobs —



CURTIS COMPTON, ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION/MCT

Evan Gattis' primary focus this season will be improving his batting average and replacing Brian McCann behind the plate.

from valet to janitor to cart boy at a golf course — and struggled to uncover a deeper meaning to life, hoping that would help him deal with his demons. He became a wanderer, traveling through the western United States. He lived out of his vehicle and listened intently to the words of various spiritual advisers.

Finally, something clicked. The quest was over. It was time to get back to what he knew best — baseball.

His stepbrother was playing at the University of Texas at the Permian Basin. Gattis joined the team and became one of the top players in the Heartland Conference, showing enough power and potential to be a late-round pick by the Braves.

It's a story Gattis has recounted over and over, and knows he'll have to tell again. But he's focused on improving his batting average from last season and catching a revamped pitching staff.

"I know there are going to be adjustments to make," Gattis said. "I just hope it's an easy adjustment. Brian was a great catcher for the Braves but now it's up to me for as many games as they give me and it's my job to help this team get to the World Series."

Braves manager Fredi Gonzalez said he was impressed by Gattis' work with the pitchers last season while he adjusted to the majors.

"The pitchers like working with him," Gonzalez said. "He's adjusting to the leadership position, but he never had any trouble working with the veteran pitchers last season. Maybe they were afraid of him."

The 6-foot-4, 240-pound Gattis is physically intimidating, but in the locker room, he's just one of the guys trying to blend in as the starting catcher. He'll talk about the past, but his eyes are more on the future.

MLB

Red Sox looking for their new leading man

With Ellsburys exit, Boston weighs options for top of batting order

By HOWARD ULMAN
The Associated Press

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Now batting first for the Boston Red Sox?

Good question.

The departure of Jacoby Ellsbury left a vacancy at the top of the lineup. Daniel Nava and Shane Victorino were manager John Farrell's first two candidates to fill it and he recently mentioned Jonny Gomes as another possibility.

None of them will lead the majors with 52 stolen bases as Ellsburys did last season — "If I can start halfway between first and second, maybe I've got a shot," Nava said — but all have a knack for getting on base so the big hitters can drive them in.

Nava's .385 on-base percentage was fifth in the AL last season and Victorino's .351 was 23rd. Ellsburys finished 19th at .355 then signed a seven-year contract with the New York Yankees.

Gomes, at .344, platoons with Nava in left field and could hit first when he plays, despite having more power and less speed than the typical leadoff batter.

"I hit first a lot in the minor leagues," Gomes said Monday. "When you look at the numbers without names being next to them you say, 'OK, this guy bats first.' And then the name pops up and, 'Oh, no, we can't have this guy.' Why not? What happened?"

None of the three candidates would have to change their approach much, if at all. But they didn't bat first much last year when Ellsburys had that spot for 134 games for the World Series champions. Dustin Pedroia led off 11 times, Nava nine and Victorino eight.

"It doesn't matter where I hit," Victorino said. "It doesn't matter where I play."

The Red Sox also must replace Ellsburys in center field, where his speed helped him race to catch balls in the gaps. Jackie Bradley Jr. takes over after an inconsistent first year. Victorino could shift from right field to play there. And Grady Sizemore, sidelined the past two seasons after some outstanding years in Cleveland, could see



STEVEN SENNE/AP

Boston Red Sox right fielder Daniel Nava, left, fields the ball as outfielder Alex Hassan, center, and catcher Ryan Lavarnway look on during spring training Saturday in Fort Myers, Fla. Nava is a contender to replace Jacoby Ellsburys as leadoff hitter.

time in center.

"It was definitely different," Bradley said of last season, when he won a roster spot with a strong spring training only to falter after that. "I learned a lot. You know what you're getting into now and I leave last year [behind]. I'm excited and I'm ready for the opportunity to show what I've got."

Bradley likely will hit near the bottom of the order, so the more he produces, the more chances the leadoff hitter will have to drive him home. The No. 1 hitter is guaranteed to lead off only the first inning.

"There's a really good chance that in the fifth inning your leadoff guy is coming up with the bases loaded," Gomes said. "So he may hit first one at bat a game."

Still, the lineup is based on getting runners on base before the best hitters start

batting in the third, fourth and fifth spots. So that ability to reach base is critical. Last year those spots were filled most of the time by Pedroia, David Ortiz and Mike Napoli.

"You're the table setter," Nava said. "We've got a bunch of guys who can do a lot of damage. That's what Ells did such a good job of last year. He got on base. He disrupted the throwing game."

Nava's .303 batting average last season was higher than Ellsburys' .298. But whoever replaces Ellsburys, in the lineup, on base and in the field, can't match his overall accomplishments.

"We all know what he brought to the table in all facets of the game, especially how much he meant on the defensive end. He'll be missed," right-hander Jake Peavy said.

"At the same time, we certainly believe in the guys that we have out there. There's not a better right fielder than Shane Victorino. We believe in Jackie. Grady Sizemore. We have no problems in believing that they'll hold their own."

Of course, there's one area where the difference will be dramatic.

Victorino was second on the team with 21 steals, still less than half of Ellsburys' total. Gomes stole one base and Nava none.

"Fifty-two bags is tough to make up for, but if you pick six guys and you ask them to steal six bags more than they did last year — it's one a month — it's [almost] going to cover it. One person doesn't have to steal 50."

Certainly not Gomes, right?
"Just watch," he said with a grin.

Limits: Wacha perfecting curveball

FROM BACK PAGE

The 22-year-old Wacha exceeded Miller's innings total last season when minor league action is factored into the total. He threw nearly 100 innings in the major leagues, with 30⅓ occurring during postseason play.

His breakout came in the postseason, where he went 4-1 with a 2.64 ERA and 33 strikeouts.

"It was a lot of fun, that's for sure, being on that kind of stage and performing the way we all did," Wacha said. "Those expectations are going to be set pretty high after the season we all just had. I just try not to listen too much and set my own expectations and try to achieve those."

The Cardinals' front office is

trying to temper those expectations, too, but coaches say Wacha looks like the same pitcher they saw in the postseason.

"We always try to manage expectations in general," general manager John Mozeliak said. "There's no doubt when you see something like that happen it's easy to gravitate to higher thoughts or higher expectations."

Pitch location has been an emphasis for Wacha this spring, especially with the development of his curveball, hoping to turn that into another plus pitch to go with a fastball that hits 97 and a deceptive change-up.

The curveball showed improvement after last season's call-up and continues to progress this spring.

"It's coming along nicely," Wacha said. "I've definitely got some more work to do. I'm definitely working on it in bullpens and side sessions, and then also the live pitching practice as well."

The Cardinals are holding off naming Wacha to their regular-season rotation, but with Garcia's status unknown, it's becoming harder to assemble a rotation that doesn't include Wacha's name.

"When he's right he's working bottom of the zone with great tilt, great angle on the ball and with an above-average, right-handed changeup — one of the better ones in the league already," manager Mike Matheny said. "We don't necessarily have another guy exactly like that."



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Cardinals pitcher Michael Wacha threw nearly 100 innings in his first year in the majors.

MLB



TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

Kansas City Royals pitcher Brad Penny reaches down to field a ground ball as he participates in fielding drills during practice on Monday at the Royals' spring training complex in Surprise, Ariz.

Royals' defense in spotlight for hopes of postseason play

By ALAN ESKEW
The Associated Press

SURPRISE, Ariz. — If defense wins championships, the Kansas City Royals could end their 29-year playoff drought.

In 2013, the Royals had three Gold Glove winners — first baseman Eric Hosmer, catcher Salvador Perez, and left fielder Alex Gordon — for the first time in their history.

From 1990 to 2010, the Royals had only two Gold Glove winners, outfielder Jermaine Dye (2000) and second baseman Mark Grudzielanek (2006).

Gordon, who came up as a third baseman and did not shift to the outfield until 2010, has won three straight Gold Gloves in left. The last Royal to win three or more Gold Gloves in a row was second baseman Frank White, who won six in a row from 1977 to 1982.

"I just truly believe one year we're going to have four and five Gold Glove winners," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "When you get three on one team, that's phenomenal."

He mentioned center fielder Lorenzo Cain, who finished second in the balloting last year, shortstop Alcides Escobar and third baseman Mike Moustakas as potential Gold Glove winners. The Royals had an AL best 3.45 ERA in 2013, which Yost said

"I just truly believe one year we're going to have four and five Gold Glove winners."

Ned Yost
Kansas City Royals manager



goes hand-in-hand with the tough defense.

Jeremy Guthrie, who won a career high 15 games last season, came back to the Royals after declining for free agency after 2012. "I love the defense," Guthrie said. "It's a huge reason I wanted to come back. It's a huge reason I've had the success pitching here. It's never anything you can discount much. The defense helps the pitching staff."

Hosmer became the first first baseman in franchise history to earn a Gold Glove. He saves his other infielders errors, a tall 6-foot-4 athletic target that not only can leap to catch high tosses but also digs out throws in the dirt.

"That's a big part," Hosmer said. "I want to make the other infielders feel as comfortable as possible because in this game a play can be decided in less than a second. That can be the difference in them thinking about throwing it and rather than just turning and throwing it."

With a runner on third base, the pitchers are not concerned about throwing a pitch in the dirt rolling to the backstop with Perez behind the plate. Opponents are less apt

to steal on Perez, who has been clocked at 1.83 seconds, .17 seconds faster than the big league average, on throws to second base.

"I would say what Salvy does in terms of holding runners, blocking balls and making plays at the plate, there's probably nobody better than him at doing those things," Guthrie said.

They may not be highlight web gems, but Yost realizes how important they are.

"Those are all little things that no one really thinks about that helps us be better because our pitchers know they can bury a pitch in a crucial situation and it's going to be blocked," Yost said. "They know if they give Salvy an opportunity behind the plate, a runner tries to steal he's going to be out. They know if they make their pitch, the fielder is going to catch it. It's all a big part of it."

With the offseason additions of right fielder Norichika Aoki, who won six Golden Gloves in Japan, and second baseman Omar Infante, the Royals could be even better defensively this season. There is not a defensive weak link. "Everybody's average to above average," Yost said.

New collision rule leaves exceptions

By RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Rather than ban home plate collisions outright, Major League Baseball and its players adopted a rule limiting them this season.

In what both sides said was a one-year experiment, the rule allows collisions if the catcher has the ball and is blocking



the runner's direct path to home plate, and if the catcher goes into the basepath to field a throw to the plate.

"It's not a radical departure from what it had been," Tampa Bay Rays manager Joe Maddon said.

The new rule, 7.13, states "a runner attempting to score may not deviate from his direct pathway to the plate in order to initiate contact with the catcher (or other player covering home plate)." A runner violating the rule shall be declared out, even if the fielder drops the ball.

"It's good, I think it takes away the malicious intent behind the play at the plate," Texas Rangers catcher J.P. Arencibia said. "Obviously the runner doesn't always have to slide, and the catcher still has the ability to block the plate once he has the ball in hand."

Along with the rule, the sides agreed to a pair of comments umpires use for interpretation. The first comment says "the failure by the runner to make an effort to touch the plate, the runner's lowering of the shoulder, or the runner's pushing through with his hands, elbows or arms, would support a determination that the runner deviated from the pathway in order to initiate contact with the catcher in violation." The comment says players who slide appropriately are not in violation of the rule.

The second comment says that "unless the catcher is in possession of the ball, the catcher cannot

block the pathway of the runner as he is attempting to score." The runner shall be declared safe if the catcher violates that provision. In addition, it is not a violation "if the catcher blocks the pathway of the runner in order to field a throw, and the umpire determines that the catcher could not have fielded the ball without blocking the pathway of the runner and that contact with the runner was unavoidable."

"There are some things that often times can make the water a little muddy," union head Tony Clark said after meeting with the New York Yankees. "Over the course of the offseason, the concern was protecting players, but trying to draw up something that not only made sense on paper, but also was going to make sense to the players that were playing on the field."

The umpire crew chief can use the new video-review system to determine whether the rule was violated.

"It stops guys just going out of their way just to try to dislodge the baseball when they (catchers) have the plate," Texas Rangers manager Ron Washington said.

Debate over plate collisions has intensified since May 2011, when San Francisco's Buster Posey was injured as the Marlins' Scott Cousins crashed into him at the plate. Posey, an All-Star catcher, sustained a broken bone in his lower left leg and three torn ligaments in his ankle, an injury that ended his season.

In Game 5 of last year's AL championship series, Detroit backstop Alex Avila was pulled a couple of innings after being run over at the plate by Boston's David Ross, a fellow catcher.

"I think it's fair. A runner's path is to home plate," Oakland catcher Derek Norris said. "Any deviation and he's not trying to score, he's trying to harm. A runner going out of the basepath trying to break up a double play is declared out. This is the same concept as a double-play slide."



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

The Marlins' Scott Cousins, top, scores the go-ahead run in the 12th inning as he collides with Giants catcher Buster Posey in a 2011 game in San Francisco. Using a new rule, 7.13, adopted by MLB and the players' association on a one-year experimental basis, the umpire crew chief can use the new video-review system to determine whether the rule was violated on a play.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



ANDREW FERGUSON/AP

Baylor's Kenny Chery, left, drives against West Virginia's Gary Browne during Saturday's game in Morgantown, W.Va.

Bears moving off bubble

Strong run has Baylor on verge of NCAA tournament

By JOHN MARSHALL
The Associated Press

Baylor appears to be back on the right side of the bubble after a strong run the past two weeks.

Coming off a difficult stretch that had the Bears teetering away from an NCAA tournament bid, they put themselves back in the conversation with a four-game winning streak capped by Saturday's decisive road victory over West Virginia. "We've got to keep working hard to get to the tournament," said Baylor's Royce O'Neal, who scored a season-high 22 points against the Mountaineers. "But this means a lot against a good team that had been playing well."

It's certainly a good step for a team that had been reeling.

Baylor opened the season 13-2, its only losses to Syracuse and Iowa State.

After that, the Bears went into a near freefall, losing eight of their next 10 games to go from what seemed to be an NCAA tournament lock to a team needing a strong push at the end of the season.

Baylor started the stretch run with a dominating win over TCU, then padded its résumé with victories over Kansas State and Oklahoma State.

The win over West Virginia put the Bears at 18-9 overall and 6-8, with an RPI of 40.

There's still work to do, but Baylor is in much better position than it was just two weeks ago.

Here's a look at some of the other teams that rose and fell from the NCAA tournament bubble over the past week:

Moving up

SMU: The Mustangs, as you might recall, were among the teams teetering on the bubble last week. They moved a few steps away from it with a pair of victories last week. SMU took care of business with a win over Houston, then strengthened its NCAA credentials by knocking off No. 21 Connecticut in Storrs. That moved the Mustangs to 22-6 and back into The Associated Press poll at No. 23.

BYU: A road loss to Pacific could have put a dent in the Cougars' NCAA chances. Three straight wins, including Thursday night's 73-65 shutdown of No. 25 Gonzaga has them looking pretty good now. BYU (19-10, 11-5 WCC) has a solid RPI of 33 and one of the nation's toughest schedules, with five of its 10 losses to teams that were ranked at the time.

Stanford: Already peeling away from the bubble, the Cardinal picked up a massive victory over the weekend, knocking off No. 23 UCLA at home. Stanford is 18-8 overall, 9-5 in the strong Pac-12 and an RPI of 39. Barring a late-season meltdown, the Cardinal appears to be in good shape.

Dayton: Archie Miller's Flyers were one of college basketball's surprises early in the season, earning them a spot in The AP poll (at No. 25) for the first time since 2009. A string of five losses in six games hurt Dayton's NCAA chances, but the Flyers (19-8, 7-5 Atlantic 10) have gotten back on track at the right time, heading into Tuesday night's game against Saint Joseph's on a six-game winning streak.

Falling back

Mississippi: The Rebels had a big opportunity to solidify their NCAA résumé last week and came up short with losses to Kentucky and Florida. Ole Miss is 16-11, has lost four straight and six of eight, and an RPI of 80, so it's likely going to take a big push to get into the Big Dance.

Minnesota: Two solid wins over Indiana and Northwestern put the Gophers back into the NCAA tournament conversation. A pair of lopsided losses to Illinois and Ohio State last week have them sliding off the bubble. Minnesota (17-11) has lost six of eight and, at 6-9 in the Big Ten, may need a strong run in the conference tournament to get into the bracket.

Xavier: The Musketeers (18-9) had been one of the Big East's leading bubble contenders, but a lopsided loss to fellow bubble Georgetown could hurt their chances. Xavier did beat Cincinnati earlier in the season, but most of its good wins were against teams scrapping for at-large spots as well. The Musketeers could use a win over Creighton on Saturday or Villanova in its season finale to make a better case.

Tennessee: Texas A&M could be the Vols' ticket out of the dance. Tennessee has played one of the nation's toughest schedules and has some decent wins, but a season sweep by the 118th-in-the-RPI Aggies could hurt when Selection Sunday rolls around. The Vols' overtime loss to Texas A&M on Saturday was their third in four games and they'll need to finish the regular season strong and maybe make a run in the SEC to get into the field.

Roundup

Syracuse holds off Maryland

The Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Up by 12 points with just under 6 minutes left, No. 4 Syracuse appeared poised to secure an unusually easy victory.

Not a chance. After letting the seemingly comfortable lead dwindle to a single point in the closing seconds, Syracuse squeezed past Maryland 57-55 on Monday to end a two-game losing streak.

It was another close call for the Orange (26-2, 13-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), whose previous four games were decided by a total of 12 points.

"We're in a lot of these games," coach Jim Boheim said. "For the most part we've made good plays at the end of them, and that's why we are where we are. We're not overpowering too many people, I can promise you that."

Syracuse led 51-39 with 5:45 left but allowed Maryland to close to 56-55 with 47 seconds remaining. After C.J. Fair missed a jumper for the Orange, Baye Moussa Keita blocked a driving layup by Nick Faust to keep Syracuse in front.

"I thought Nick got fouled and the replay showed that," Maryland coach Mark Turgeon said. "It's been that type of year for us."

Trevor Cooney was fouled and made one of two free throws with 4 seconds to go before Maryland's Seth Allen's off-balance shot bounced off the back of the rim as the buzzer sounded.

Tyler Ennis scored 20 points and Fair had 17 to help Boheim secure his 946th career victory.

Kansas 83, Oklahoma 75: Naadir Tharpe had 19 points to lead five of the host team's players in double figures, and the fifth-ranked Jayhawks held off the Sooners to wrap up a share of their 10th consecutive Big 12 championship.

Wayne Selden and Andrewiggins added 15 points each, and Joel Embiid had 12 points and 13 rebounds for Kansas (22-13-2), which poured off the bench at the buzzer to celebrate the latest addition to their nation-leading 57 conference titles.

It might be the only one for Wiggins and Embiid, the dynamic freshman duo projected to be lottery picks if they come out this season. Wiggins has already stated his intention to do so.

Cameron Clark had 18 points and Buddy Hield finished with 16 for the Sooners (20, 8-9-6), who have lost 12 of their last 13 games against the Jayhawks.

Oklahoma had Kansas on the ropes for most of this one.

After taking the lead midway through the second half, Kansas started to put the hammer down, frustrating Oklahoma into poor outside shots and slicing through the lane for easy layups.

Tharpe made it all happen, either scoring himself or helping one of his teammates. The much-maligned point guard finished with five assists and only one turnover.

Only two schools in men's Division I basketball have won more consecutive conference titles than Kansas: UCLA captured 13 straight from 1967-79 in the Pac-10, and Gonzaga won 19 straight in the West Coast Conference from 2001-11.

SPORTS



Called into question

Character flaws coming into play for prospects at combine | **Page 24**

MLB

No limits

Cards not concerned about Wacha's workload

By **CHUCK KING**
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JUPITER, Fla.

The St. Louis Cardinals aren't setting any limits for young pitcher Michael Wacha.

"I don't see any reason why there is the buzz about the workload," St. Louis pitching coach Derek Lilliquist said. "He had 170 innings last year. You can think he could be a 200-inning guy this year. At the end of the day we need some guys who can give us 200 innings."

Wacha's readiness became more important last weekend, when the Cardinals announced that Jaime Garcia had returned to St. Louis to have his surgically repaired shoulder examined. Last season, only Adam Wainwright and Lance Lynn eclipsed the 200-inning mark for the Cardinals.

Shelby Miller exceeded 170 innings as a rookie, but that prompted the Cardinals to slow him down. Miller was moved to the bullpen for the post-season, opening the door for Wacha to join the rotation.

SEE LIMITS ON PAGE 29

Did you know

Wacha's breakout in his rookie season came in the playoffs, when he went 4-1 with a 2.64 ERA and was named MVP of the National League Championship Series.

SOURCES: AP, stlouis.cardinals.mlb.com



St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Michael Wacha tosses a ball to a teammate during spring training on Monday in Jupiter, Fla.

JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Sabres still shopping goalie Miller ahead of trade deadline | **NHL, Page 27**

Royals confident solid defense can help end their playoff drought | **MLB, Page 30**



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